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**Writers, Publishers, And Readers:
Popular Romanticism In The
Marketplace**

L. Wright

PhD

2019

**Writers, Publishers, And Readers:
Popular Romanticism In The
Marketplace**

Leighton Wright

**A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment
of the requirements of the
University of Northumbria at Newcastle
for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy**

**Research undertaken in the
Faculty of Arts, Design & Social Sciences**

June 2019

Thesis Abstract

In *Reading, Writing, and Romanticism: The Anxiety of Reception* (2000), Lucy Newlyn posits that ‘Romanticism can be understood as a species of “reaction-formation”—a system of defences against the new power of reading’ due to the new industrialised conditions of the Romantic print market, characterised by the ‘rise of the reader’. This thesis builds on contributions like Newlyn’s that have considered how Romantic-era creativity was influenced by the changes that marked the print culture of the era. It departs from these studies in arguing that the idea of a ‘reaction-formation’ was unavailable for popular writers of the era. I present a model of creativity that sees the texts of popular authors as the product of a sometimes vexed, sometimes playful, but always engaged relationship between writers, audiences, and non-authorial agents such as publishers and editors. I take three case studies of three of the most popular writers of the period: Lord Byron, Walter Scott and Letitia Elizabeth Landon. These writers’ careers were made possible by the newly precarious conditions of Romantic-period print culture. These writers thrived by embracing these conditions and inviting their vast and varied audiences, perceptive publishers, and the print market into the construction of their texts. Their works became poly-vocal products that achieved enormous contemporary fame. I propose that, in such a precarious period for authors, open play and experimentation in relation to audience, editors, and literary culture was the response that created and maintained Byron, Scott, and Landon’s popularity. Audience desire, interpretation, and response was central to their creativity, but rather than being anxious about it, these authors toyed and experimented with these elements in pursuit of their success. In a period which saw an increasingly responsive and diverse audience and an industrialised print market, popular authors thrived by testing the boundaries and tastes of the era through such play. By utilising fan-mail, authorial and editorial correspondence, considering print history and the phenomenon of celebrity, this thesis provides an understanding of author, editor, and audience relationships that helps map the models of creativity amongst popular authors, authors whose work constitutes the basis of a currently growing critical interest.

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Last but not least, my research would not have been possible without the unwavering support and encouragement of my parents, my partner, my family, and my friends, who pushed me through the most difficult periods and a great number of sleepless nights. Thank you all for everything you have done!

Declaration

I declare that the work contained in this thesis has not been submitted for any other award and that it is all my own work. I also confirm that this work fully acknowledges opinions, ideas and contributions from the work of others. The work was done with the help of a studentship provided by Northumbria University.

Any ethical clearance for the research presented in this thesis has been approved. Approval has been sought and granted by the **Faculty Ethics Committee** on **20/09/16**

I declare that the Word Count of this Thesis is 87,712 words

Name: Leighton Wright

Signature:

Date: 19/06/19

Introduction

‘Wordsworth has a system which disposes him to take the bull by the horns and offend public taste, which right or wrong will always be the taste of the public, yet he could be popular if he would.’—Sir Walter Scott, 1828¹

‘Aware that to elevate I must first soften, and that if I wish to purify I must first touch, I have ever endeavoured to bring forward grief, disappointment, the full leaf, the faded flower, the broken heart, and the early grave.’—Letitia Landon, 1829²

‘I shall adapt my own poesy, please God! to the fashion of the time, and, in as far as I possess the power, to the taste of my readers of the present generation; if it survives me, tanto meglio, if not, I shall have ceased to care about it.’—Lord Byron, quoted in *Blackwood’s Magazine*, 1834³

All of the above quotations, from three of the Romantic era’s most popular authors, are connected in that they all agree on the crucial role contact with their contemporary audience has upon the composition process of literature. Using the examples of Byron, Scott, and Landon, this thesis shall explore how popular writers in the Romantic period incorporated their contemporary readers and the Romantic marketplace into their creative processes, and successfully negotiated the implications of their own popularity. In particular, Scott and Landon have played relatively minor roles in accounts of Romanticism precisely for the reason that they were so popular in the period, with substantial scholarly attention only being directed their way in recent years. As Jerome McGann warns in his seminal text, *The Romantic Ideology: A Critical Investigation* (1983), scholars have uncritically accepted the self-projections of certain strains of Romanticism (particularly those of Wordsworth), which suggested that to be popular in its own

¹ Sir Walter Scott, ‘Monday, 26 May 1828’ in *The Journal of Sir Walter Scott*, ed. W.E.K. Anderson, (Oxford; Clarendon Press, 1972), p. 482.

² Letitia Elizabeth Landon, ‘Preface’ to *The Venetian Bracelet* in *Letitia Elizabeth Landon: Selected Writings*, ed. Jerome McGann and Daniel Riess, (Ontario, Broadview Press, 1997), pp. 102–103.

³ Quoted in Ian Jack, *The Poet and His Audience*, (Cambridge; Cambridge University Press, 1984), p. 88.

age, poetry must be deficient and unworthy of consideration in posterity.⁴ Therefore, because Byron, Landon, and Scott were popular, they were thus unworthy of serious study. This thesis contends, in line with much criticism of Romanticism following McGann's call to arms, that it is precisely because they were contemporarily popular that they are worthy of study, and that it is precisely because of their popularity that they developed very different methods of creativity than their more studied peers.

I shall posit that these three writers, due to their popularity, did not have the option of claiming to neglect their contemporary audiences' views in favour of deferred popularity, but instead were made to actively engage with and respond to their contemporary audience due to the commercial success of their works in the Romantic literary marketplace. In doing so, I shall demonstrate that their texts are the receptive products of interactions between these respective individual authors, a newly enlarged and empowered audience that developed in the Romantic period, and a new mercantile and industrial dynamic emerging in the print industry and marketplace in the era, best personified by engaged, intrusive, but market-savvy publishers and editors. Such responsiveness was what made possible the success of their works within the evolving literary marketplace. I shall argue that the Romantic era was a uniquely precarious period for writers due to the evolving conditions of literary production, audience composition, and reception which developed at the end of the eighteenth century, in which authors were made newly unsure of their roles. Thus, those writers who were popular in the Romantic period embraced the new, vertiginous and varied aspects of Romantic audiences and the literary marketplace in the composition of their texts, actively utilising the idea of an audience and direct editorial interventions in their creative process.

An additional point to unpack, though, is that the term 'popular', especially in regard to the Romantic era, is a uniquely complex word with a diversity of literary definitions. Indeed, Phillip Connell and Nigel Leask, in their collection of essays *Romanticism and Popular Culture in Britain and Ireland*, highlight the various meanings of 'popular', selecting the Gramscian definition of culture that arises from or is tailored towards the working classes who represent the largest cross section of Romantic society

⁴ See Jerome McGann, *The Romantic Ideology*, (Chicago, IL; University Of Chicago Press, 1983), pp. 1–14.

and whose voice has often been neglected in scholarship.⁵ Instead, this study shall consider the term ‘popular’ in relation to Byron, Scott, and Landon, not as directed at a working class audience (indeed their texts were often deliberately priced far beyond the reaches of such readers), but rather in the Marxist terms of print capitalism: popular, in this sense, denotes that Byron, Landon, and Scott’s texts were the bestselling texts of the Romantic period and were the successful products of an increasingly capitalist marketplace and form of textual production. It is how these popular texts were produced that this study is interested in.

Ultimately, then, when authors take into account, respond to, or adhere to their audiences’, their editors’, their publishers’, or literary culture’s demands, creativities, interventions, as well as the implications of their own fame, they produce what I shall label the ‘polyvocal text’. In the production of the ‘polyvocal text,’ the influence of others is embraced, thus rejecting the traditional self-projections of Romanticism of an author producing texts in solitary from purely their own imagination: the ‘Romantic Ideology’ McGann warns against. Of course, the idea that Romantic texts are collaborative is no longer as unfamiliar as it once was. Pioneering work by feminist scholars such as Anne Mellor have emphasised that female Romantic writers tended to prize relationship and community rather than Bloomian isolation; criticism of the ‘Cockney School’ by the likes of Jeffrey Cox and Nicholas Roe has prized the idea of coterie production; Felicity James has considered the communities of friendship that created the works of Charles Lamb and others; and, more generally, critics such as Jon Mee, Gillian Russell and Clara Tuite have analysed the cultures of Romantic conversation and sociability.⁶ The thesis as a whole, as shall be clear, draws considerably on this substantial recent work on Romantic print culture in order to offer an analysis of the intersection of these agents (author, publisher, audience, editor, and so on) as forming itself a creative process that requires, I argue, detailed analysis. It shall establish that, whilst authors had to directly account for the views of increasingly assertive publishers, crucially they had to

⁵ Such ‘popular’ products include the widely distributed chapbooks of the era and orally transmitted poetry and tales. See Phillip Connell and Nigel Leask, ‘What Is The People?’ in *Romanticism and Popular Culture in Britain and Ireland*, ed. Phillip Connell and Nigel Leask, (Cambridge; Cambridge University Press, 2009), pp.3-14.

⁶ See Anne K. Mellor, *Romanticism and Gender*, (London; Routledge, 1993); Jeffrey N. Cox, *Poetry and Politics in the Cockney School*, (Cambridge; Cambridge University Press, 1998); Nicholas Roe, *John Keats and the Culture of Dissent*, (Oxford; Oxford University Press, 1998), Felicity James, *Charles Lamb, Coleridge and Wordsworth: Reading Friendship in the 1790s*, (London; Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), Jon Mee, *Conversable Worlds: Literature, Contention, and Community 1762 to 1830*, (Oxford; Oxford University Press, 2011), and Gillian Russell and Clara Tuite, *Romantic Sociability: Social Networks and Literary Culture in Britain, 1770-1840*, (Cambridge; Cambridge University Press, 2006).

acknowledge the implications of their newfound fame amongst an expanded audience with varied viewpoints: audience may not directly suggest amendments to texts, however popular authors produced texts continuously with an awareness of an expanding and diverse set of engaged readerships. Authors had to reflect on this new culture of readership emergent in the Romantic period. Whilst the views of these agents may diverge, crucially this instability itself, I shall argue, is often the basis of the creative act that produces the texts published by these writers. The period was, as I will discuss shortly, felt as an unusually precarious one in the history of author–publisher–audience relations. Such a precarious period, somewhat understandably, led certain writers to reject or turn away from such a culture. This thesis offers case studies of three of the most prominent examples of Romantic authors who did not—or could not—turn away from this precarious culture. It argues that they provide us with a model of creativity that was characterised not only by a responsive relationship with audience and the literary marketplace, but also experimentation and a playfulness. In order to test the boundaries of the precarious period they wrote within, I shall demonstrate that Scott, Byron, and Landon, toyed and experimented with audience and editors in order to gauge their reactions, and calibrate their next literary ventures. This developed a feedback loop, ultimately producing the ‘polyvocal text’: a text created by the direct interventions of editors, as well as authors’ new recognition that they must acknowledge the exponentially vast Romantic audiences’ response to and interest in their works and lives as an implication of their popularity. This responsive playfulness, I shall argue, not only produced their popularity but then guided their relationships with audience and literary culture, but also dictated that they could never embrace a form of authorship based on rejection of their contemporary audience and literary culture in favour of a deferred audience, just as the opening three quotations to this thesis demonstrate.

Print Culture In the Romantic Period

The Romantic era was, according to Maria Jane Jewsbury, the ‘age of books! of book making! of book reading! of book reviewing! and book forgetting!’⁷ It was an age defined by the exponential increase of printed materials, the rapidity of textual production

⁷ Maria Jane Jewsbury, ‘The Age Of Books’ in *Phantasmagoria; Or, Sketches of Life and Literature*, 2 Vols, (London, 1825), vol. 1, p. 3.

and dissemination, and a public who, for the first time, had access to a range of relatively cheap book-length literary texts.⁸ Lee Erickson, for instance, estimates that in 1780, around 3,000 different texts were published in England. By 1792, that had doubled to 6,000.⁹ However, in order to understand how and why the idea of an audience could become the centre of popular writers' creative processes and how such a 'precarious period' for authorship developed, we must first explore the tumultuous conditions brought about within the Romantic period from the early 1790s to the late 1830s.

Many scholars, perhaps buying into the self-mythologising of its writers, have characterised the Romantic period as a 'revolution' due to the above factors. However, H. J. Jackson proposes that this is 'the wrong word to apply to the reading environment of Britain in the Romantic period'.¹⁰ She highlights that 'that between 1790 and 1830 we can see the beginning and the end of a reading boom, a boom activated not so much by social, political, or technological changes (though partly by them) as by competitive commercial activity, especially advertising and reviewing; and that when the boom was over, a somewhat chastened industry started up a new path, courting the mass market that it had previously been inclined to spurn'.¹¹ Additionally, William St Clair claims that an enhanced 'reading nation' of the Romantic period was the direct product of changes in the laws governing intellectual property rights, starting with the act of 1710.¹² He argues that the crucial reform of the print industry arrived in 1774, though,

⁸ William St Clair highlights that prior to the 1790s, working class readers often only had, if they could indeed read, access to copies of the bible: 'at around the same time, School education began to make the reading of extracts of English literature a central part of the curriculum, whole communities were able, by means of reading, to make new imaginative escapes from the immediate here and now. The rapid expansion in Reading occurred across all strata of society, whether categorised by income, by occupation, by educational attainment, by geographical location, by age, or by gender.' The 'Reading Nation', as he terms it, suddenly encompassed readers from social strata previously excluded from access to literature. See William St Clair, *The Reading Nation in the Romantic Period*, (Cambridge; Cambridge University Press, 2007), p. 11

⁹ Lee Erickson, *The Economy of Literary Form: English Literature and the Industrialisation of Publishing 1800–1850*, (Baltimore, MD; Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996), p. 7.

¹⁰ For writers who characterise the Romantic period as a 'revolution' in reading, print culture, and literacy, see Jon Klancher, *The Making of English Reading Audiences 1790–1832*, (Madison, WI; University Of Wisconsin Press, 1987), William G. Rowland, *Literature & the Marketplace: Romantic Writers and their Audiences in Great Britain and the United States*, (Lincoln, NE; University Of Nebraska Press, 1996), and Erickson; For this quotation, see Heather J. Jackson, *Romantic Readers: The Evidence of Marginalia*, (New Haven, CT; Yale University Press, 2005), p. 9.

¹¹ Jackson, p. 9.

¹² St Clair characterises the years between 1710 and 1774 as the 'High Monopoly Period' whereby the 1710 act 'declares that intellectual property comes into existence with the act of composition by an author, who can then transfer the right to the book industry for a period of time that is limited by the statute to fourteen years, with provision, if the author is still alive, for another fourteen. All existing intellectual properties are maintained for a transitional period until

whereby '[f]ollowing a House of Lords judicial decision that perpetual copyright had been illegal in England since 1710, a competitive market is established in the sale of out-of-copyright texts, leading to lower prices, larger sales, and expanding readerships in these texts'.¹³ This ultimately led to English publishers aligning with their Scottish competitors in their pricing of out-of-copyright texts, for fear of being undercut.¹⁴ Older texts thus dropped in price, but the prices of new texts, covered by the 1710 Act's copyright terms, actually rose.¹⁵ As St Clair states, '[a]fter 1774 a huge, previously suppressed, demand for reading was met by a high surge in the supply of books, and was soon caught up in a virtuous cycle of growth. All the older printed texts first printed in England entered, or returned to, the public domain, available to be legally reprinted by anyone in Great Britain for sale throughout the country at whatever price their publishers chose to set'.¹⁶ This decision thus produced a new accessibility to printed matter for those with lower incomes and thus bolstered the 'reading nation'. The bookseller, James Lackington, for instance, declared that '[a]ccording to the best estimation I have been able to make, I suppose that more than four times the number of books are sold now than were sold twenty years since... in short all ranks and degrees now READ'.¹⁷

1731.' This results in divisions in the British publishing trade with the English industry maintaining perpetual copyrights of all texts (new and old) despite the act, whilst the Scottish industry robustly exercised time limits on the copyrights of older texts. 'The English industry becomes highly cartelised. Textual controls are light. Price controls are abandoned.' See St Clair, *Reading Nation*, p. 54.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ St Clair cites the example of Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* as evidence of an increased accessibility to older texts. Published in 1719 and considered then as a 'steady bestseller', within five years of 1790, it sold more copies than in the previous 70 years since its first publication. Indeed, apparently, '[d]uring the romantic period, the minimum price of out-of-copyright books halved, halved again, and went on falling, and the print runs and the sales soared and went on soaring.' See Ibid., pp. 119, 120.

¹⁵ No matter how useful his text is, it is important to query St Clair, however. In his review of *The Reading Nation*, Thomas F. Bonnell has questioned St Clair's emphasis on the importance of the House Of Lords' decision of 1774 by suggesting that 'A "long frozen culture . . . within which the reading poor had been constricted since the early seventeenth century" did not thaw in an instant after 1774, nor were most readers all that while "restricted to an ancient chapbook with a few pages and a crude woodcut," or "a copy of some anciently written, but recently reprinted, book of advice on religious practice and moral conduct, and an anthology or two of old-canon verse"'. Bonnell suggests that St Clair draws too stark a contrast and that '[t]he border dividing the literate nation from the reading nation was dissolving, but it happened over a longer stretch of time than St Clair suggests'. See Thomas F. Bonnell, 'When Book History Neglects Bibliography: Trouble with the "Old Canon" in *The Reading Nation*' in *Studies in Bibliography*, Vol. 57, (2005-6), pp. 246-261 (p. 256).

¹⁶ St Clair, *Reading Nation*, p. 115.

¹⁷ Quoted in Ibid., p. 118.

The two portraits of the Romantic period provided by Jackson and St Clair leaves the era as hovering at a point between the reforms of the eighteenth-century which led to increased access to texts and textual production, and the mass-industrialisation of the literary marketplace and mechanisation of printing brought about by the steam powered printing presses of the 1820s and 1830s.¹⁸ Taking up the opportunity of reprinting and selling out-of-copyright texts cheaply, more printing firms were established, thus leading to, ‘within a generation’, the ‘doubling of the size of the book-binding industry—an indicator of the growth of book production which is more reliable than that of printing capacity or titles published’.¹⁹ Such a transition has led scholars such as Lucy Newlyn to proclaim the decline of literary patronage in the Romantic era (whereby authors produced with the financial and enthusiastic backing of wealthy patrons that had defined production in past centuries) leading to authors increasingly turning to the public for appreciation and validation. This meant ‘success was measured in terms of the number of books sold, with writers such as Byron, Scott, Rogers, Bloomfield, Campbell, and Moore topping the list of bestselling authors’.²⁰ However, such a position neglects the transitional nature of the period that I argue created the model of authorship I will discuss, with Dustin Griffin showing that there was actually ‘no sudden change from a patronage economy to a literary marketplace’ during this period, but rather ‘overlapping “economies” of patronage and marketplace’.²¹ Undoubtedly, the working environment for authors had altered, though no one could truly predict its direction, leading to a dizzying environment for writers.

¹⁸ Discussing the late introduction of steam powered printing presses in the Romantic age, James Raven points out that, ‘[t]he long quest to improve the wooden printing press, to reduce manual effort, and to increase productivity culminated in successful experiments with an all-metal lever press at the very end of the eighteenth century, but it took a further decade to produce an effective alternative to the hand-operated press. Following Earl Stanhope’s experiments with an iron press in 1800 (and various successful initiatives in using stereotyped plates), Frederick Koenig patented a power-driven platen screw press in 1810.’ St Clair concurs, stating that whilst ‘the invention of the iron printing press, the mechanisation of papermaking, the use of steam power, and other productivity improvements reduced the cost’ of printing and therefore ‘created a new “mass audience” for reading’, nevertheless ‘without a single exception, all of the books produced during the surge in book production in the late eighteenth century were manufactured by traditional hand-craft methods largely unchanged since the fifteenth century.’ It was not until the 1820s and 1830s, a period in which the surge continued, that would see significant mechanisation in the print industry. See James Raven, *The Business of Books: Booksellers and the English Book Trade, 1450-1850*, (New Haven, CT; Yale University Press, 2007), p. 320; and St Clair, *Reading Nation*, p. 87.

¹⁹ St Clair, *Reading Nation*, p. 116.

²⁰ Lucy Newlyn, *Reading, Writing, and Romanticism: The Anxiety of Reception*, (Oxford; Oxford University Press, 2007), p. 8.

²¹ Dustin Griffin, *Literary Patronage in England, 1650-1800*, (Cambridge; Cambridge University Press, 2006), p. 10.

The result of such change was the emergence of professional publishing houses with, according to Kelvin Everest, a ‘three-part structure—publisher–wholesaler, printer, retail bookseller—which has subsequently remained in place’.²² The new ‘professional publishers’ not only funded the production of the texts in exchange for the lion’s share of the profits gained in the literary marketplace, but also employed a series of agents who read manuscripts, speculated over their potential popularity and sales based on their knowledge of audience and market conditions, and advised the publisher on negotiations with the author and on print runs. In this mould, four publishing behemoths emerged: Thomas Longman and John Murray in London, and Archibald Constable and William Blackwood of Edinburgh, each running their own printing houses, competing over sales, readers, and authors. William G. Rowland characterises the difference between the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries as one in which in the previous century great authors once collaborated with publishers, but in the nineteenth, authors sought to collaborate with great publishers.²³ Evidently, the role of the writer had been reduced to one cog, albeit a pivotal cog, in the production and sale of literary texts.

A revolutionised print industry and judgment of success on sales figures, though, implies a readership large enough to accommodate both huge print runs and editions as well as the increased variety of literature that the era entailed. As St Clair has demonstrated, new strata of the British public now had access to texts due to their availability and expense.²⁴ Furthermore, this expanded readership was increasingly overshadowed by a newly enriched, developing middle class, a product of the industrial revolution, most of whom could read and who coveted the leisure activities of Britain’s aristocracy, particularly reading. Due to the enlarged scale of this audience, it is crucial to note that readers enjoyed, in the Romantic era, more power than ever before. Jon Klancher notes its extraordinarily homogeneous values, tastes, ideologies and hence reading proclivities.²⁵ Indeed, within this emerging ‘reading public’, one group that grew to wield an intense and considerable influence throughout the late eighteenth century was female readers. The centre of gravity for audience power had not only grown

²² Kelvin Everest, *English Romantic Poetry*, (Buckingham; Open University Press, 1990), p. 69

²³ Rowland, p. 25.

²⁴ Everest argues that Britain experienced a large expansion in its population in the dying years of the eighteenth century and also reaped the rewards of an ‘Evangelical zeal in teaching people to read (to foster independent study of the Bible)’ which helped ‘to produce a huge increase in literacy’. However, St Clair disputes this by suggesting that proportional literacy rates remained stable from the eighteenth century and throughout the Romantic period. See Everest, p. 22; and St Clair, *Reading Nation*, p. 86.

²⁵ See Klancher, *The Making of English Reading Audiences*, pp. 3–17.

exponentially, but shifted away from men towards women by the Romantic period. Writers were progressively aware that they were not merely addressing a small coterie of aristocratic male readers, but an enormous, anonymous and variegated audience of which a large proportion would be comprised of ‘bluestockings’ of varied ranks, as John Keats and Byron dismissively referred to female readers.²⁶

Whilst poetry, with its proud lineage, remained the dominant genre of the early 1800s, with the coming of *Waverley* by Sir Walter Scott in 1814, novels increasingly began to corner the market as the most popular genre. Once dismissed by most men as a lower form of literature apparently read more by newly empowered female readers, novels took on an increasing share of the literary market and of male readers after Scott.²⁷ This rise of novels coupled to a new and huge variety of texts, though, led to a widespread concern that modern readers did not have the required taste to distinguish

²⁶ The term ‘bluestocking’ originates in the eighteenth century, thus demonstrating the transitional nature of the Romantic era. Concerns and thus reforming attitudes about a female readership, I would argue, though, perhaps reached its zenith by the late Romantic period. Displaying his anxieties about this female audience, Keats complained in a letter to J. H. Reynolds that ‘The world, and especially our England, has within the last thirty year’s [sic] been vexed and teased by a set of Devils, whom I detest so much that I almost hunger after an acherontic promotion to a Torturer, purposely for their accomodation [sic]; These Devils are a set of Women, who having taken a snack or Luncheon of Literary scraps, set themselves up for towers of Babel in Languages Sapphos in Poetry—Euclids in Geometry—and everything in nothing. Among such the Name of Montague has been preeminent.’ See John Keats, ‘To J. H. Reynolds, 21 September 1817’ in *The Letters of John Keats 1814–1821*, ed. Hyder Edward Rollins, 2 Vols., (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1958), vol. 1, p. 163; and Byron told his publisher John Murray that ‘I do not despise Mrs. Heman [sic]—but if [she] knit blue stockings instead of wearing them it would be better.’ See Lord Byron, ‘To John Murray, 28 September 1820’ in *Byron’s Letters and Journals*, ed. Leslie A. Marchand, 12 Vols., (London; William Clowes & Sons, 1973), vol. 7, p. 182.

²⁷ Indeed, St Clair highlights that ‘[e]very circulating library worthy of the name took each new *Waverley* novel as soon as it came out, often several copies. Some London and circulating libraries it was said in 1826, were “obliged to have from fifty to seventy copies of each novel when it comes out.”’ Estimating the success of Scott, he also notes that ‘[n]ot every reader who handled a volume, we can be sure, read it through or went onto the next volume, but few men and women who read any new books at all did not read *Waverley* novels at least in part, and many read every title as it came out. It was a publishers’ joke that a man had been discovered at a London party who had not read the Scotch novels. The larger the sales, the record shows, the more a book was also rented. The bigger the sales, therefore, the bigger the multiplier needed to convert to readership. The predominance of Scott over all the other modern literary authors turns out to be many times greater than we might have estimated from the production and sales figures, huge though these are.’ Additionally, his research shows that often literary or philosophical societies, whose membership was often exclusively male in the period, often abandoned or neglected their stated aims in order to take in copies of the *Waverley* novels for its members. See William St Clair, ‘Publishing, Authorship, And Reading’ in *The Cambridge Companion to Fiction in the Romantic Period*, ed. Richard Maxwell and Katie Trumpener, (Cambridge; Cambridge University Press, 2008), p. 41; and *Reading Nation*, p. 254.

‘trashy’ novels from higher literature, or good poetry from bad. Due to their fast production and availability, texts could be viewed as interchangeable as any mass produced product. With such a large menu of works, how could an audience choose?

Considerations of both an immeasurable and unknowable audience and such an array of literary options ultimately led to the rise of a new kind of periodical criticism in the early 1800s. Periodicals had existed in the 1700s, with *The Critical Review* or *The Monthly Review* as notable examples which continued into the Romantic age; although, mirroring the print explosion, the number of journals boomed in the first decades of the nineteenth-century. Two periodicals dominated the age and exemplified this change, with both of their origins lying in the same industrial backgrounds as the emergent print houses: the Constable-owned *Edinburgh Review*, and the Murray-established *Quarterly Review*. Established in 1802, *The Edinburgh* represents the most revolutionary example of this, with both Derek Roper and Marilyn Butler demonstrating the metamorphosis it brought to the format.²⁸ Its advertisement that it would only review publications ‘that either have retained, or deserve, a certain portion of celebrity’ encapsulates the crucial differences between the centuries. Whereas the journals of the 1700s could review every text that was published due to their relative scarcity, as a result of the nineteenth-century’s expanded print industry, *The Edinburgh* knew it could not, and thus selected literature from the multitude of texts for response: those deemed to have met its selective criteria.²⁹ *The Edinburgh* thus seized for itself the role of arbiter, guiding its readers (whom it identified as the whole reading public, not just Whigs) in their selection of which texts to value.³⁰ *The Quarterly*, set up in 1809 by Murray and William Gifford to counter *The Edinburgh*, was Tory-leaning in response to its rival; it held, though, the same discerning self-appointed role.

At their height Butler claims that both *The Edinburgh* and *The Quarterly* printed around ‘13,000’ copies each and that ‘Jeffrey estimated that at least three people saw

²⁸ Derek Roper, *Reviewing Before The Edinburgh, 1788-1802* (London; Methuen and Co., 1978); and Marilyn Butler, ‘Culture’s Medium: The Role Of The Review’ in *The Cambridge Companion to British Romanticism*, ed. Stuart Curran, (Cambridge; Cambridge University Press, 1993), pp. 120–47.

²⁹ ‘Advertisement’ in *The Edinburgh Review*, Vol. 1, (October 1802), p. 3.

³⁰ Unsurprisingly, Constable published books were rarely attacked. Additionally, in relation to *The Edinburgh* addressing the whole reading nation as opposed to only those who agreed with its political principles (with the same applying for *The Quarterly*), David Stewart points out that ‘[t]here is no persuasive evidence that the readerships of different magazines were mutually exclusive’. See David Stewart, *Romantic Magazines and Metropolitan Literary Culture*, (Basingstoke; Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), p. 59.

every copy, so that the journals had a readership of several times their actual circulation'.³¹ Taking this into account, John Gross estimates that their combined readership totalled around '100,000', nearly five times their combined sales figures.³² Reviews, therefore, as a response to the new literary conditions of the Romantic age, offer us a crucial insight into the ways audience functioned as an often unattached, vast and diverse, multitude with an awareness of the print industry, a desire for a variety of texts, and eagerness to engage with a culture that is constantly, self-consciously aware of and responsive to its other components. The new, precarious world authors inherited was defined by such volatile, evolving relationships and capitalistic conditions, always with an audience defined by hungry and influential reviewers and insightful but diverse readers watching on.

Romantic Studies

Since the early 1980s, Romantic studies has been dominated by New Historicism, spearheaded by McGann's *The Romantic Ideology*. In it, McGann proposes that 'the past and its works should be studied by critical minds in the full range of their pastness—in their differences and their alienation (both contemporary and historical)' and that 'poems are social and historical products and that the critical study of that product must be grounded in a socio-historical analytic'.³³ McGann echoes the statements of Scott, Landon, and Byron that opened this thesis, suggesting that a text is the product of its contemporary moment and, in order to understand it, modern readers must take into account the Romantic experience of its readers, its writers, and the print market in which it was consumed. In analysing the influence readers and the literary marketplace had upon the moment of composition, this thesis shall follow McGann's prescription.

Also adhering to this, Jon Klancher, in *The Making of English Reading Audiences, 1791–1832* (1987), set out to transform our understanding of those Romantic audiences by positing that 'the intense cultural politics of the Romantic period obliged writers not only to distinguish among conflicting audiences, but to do so by elaborating new relations *between* the individual reader and collective audience. For a reader is just

³¹ Marilyn Butler, *Peacock Displayed: A Satirist in His Context*, (London; Routledge, 1979), p. 273.

³² John Gross, *The Rise and Fall of the Man of Letters*, (London; Weidenfeld, 1969), p. 2.

³³ McGann, *The Romantic Ideology*, pp. 2, 3.

as surely constituted among audiences when he is apparently abstracted from *all* audience-belonging as when he is firmly embedded within it'.³⁴ Klancher thus claims that 'audiences are not simply aggregates of readers. They are complicated social and textual formations; they have interpretative tendencies and ideological contours' and that '[s]tudying them requires us to ask what kind of collective they represent and how an individual reader becomes aware of belonging to a great social audience.'³⁵ Within the new conditions Klancher details, 'Byron and Scott awakened to a massive audience for which they would perform, but a public they had never attempted to make'.³⁶ The crucial point Klancher makes, then, is that Romantic readers were a divided or 'textured' mass—there were *audiences*, not just an *audience*—and those audiences would respond to texts in diverse and evolving ways, ways Romantic writers had to respond to. Unlike previous studies of these authors, using Klancher's guidance, I shall contend that it was precisely these popular authors' open acknowledgement and acceptance that they could not dictate reception of their works, and their receptiveness to a multitude of audiences and interpretations, which sculpted their literature. They had to grapple with the implication that more engaged, responsive, and diverse readers than ever before would interpret and respond to their texts. Such audiences were the natural consequence of the developments Klancher details and these authors' phenomenal commercial success.

Six years later, Anne Mellor's *Romanticism and Gender* (1993) aided our understanding of the differences between male and female writers in the period, especially in relation to how they compose their texts with both a contemporary audience and an audience in posterity in mind. Rehabilitating writers like Landon and Felicia Hemans into the canon, she posited that Romanticism is divided into two forms: a masculine Romanticism, dominated by the 'egotistical sublime' of Wordsworthian thought which celebrates the 'achievements of the imagination or the overflow of powerful feelings', and a feminine Romanticism, which 'promoted a politics of gradual rather than violent social change, a social change that extends the values of domesticity into the public realm' and which functioned along communitarian lines rather than celebrating the achievement of the individual.³⁷ Whereas the 'male' poet was celebrated as the sole origin of creativity, 'feminine Romanticism', according to Mellor, constituted female poets thinking about

³⁴ Klancher, *The Making of English Reading Audiences*, p. 11.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 6.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 14.

³⁷ Mellor, *Romanticism and Gender*, p. 3.

and accepting the views of others, including their readers, as considerations in the composition of their poetry.³⁸ However, as I shall show, Mellor's labelling of a 'communitarian' writing process as 'feminine Romanticism' is problematic. Indeed, my study shall argue that both Byron and Scott display attitudes in their considerate compositional process that Mellor would identify as 'feminine,' as well as traditionally masculine attitudes.³⁹ Instead, I shall show that whilst this model of authorship may be utilised by the female writers Mellor studies, it is also a driver and a product of popular authors' success. To be (and stay) popular, my three chosen authors had to invite audience and editorial intervention into their writings.

The crucial intervention for this thesis, though, is Newlyn's *Reading, Writing, and Romanticism: The Anxiety of Reception* (2000). In it, Newlyn intervenes in the rise of New Historicism to reengage with an idea that had since dropped out of fashion: psychoanalysis, and, connected to it, Harold Bloom's psychoanalytically-inflected *The Anxiety of Influence: A Theory of Poetry* (1973).⁴⁰ She claims that:

Bloom's celebrated theory of the 'anxiety of influence' lays all its emphasis on one side of the polarity, writer–reader, and works in a single temporal direction only. In doing this, it risks ignoring the duality of the writing–reading subject, who looks both 'before and after'. All writers are also readers, and many readers also write. Anxieties experienced by writers centre as much on the future as on the past—not just because an author's status, authority, and posthumous life are dependent upon readers, but because writing exists in dialogue with others whose sympathies it hopes to engage.⁴¹

³⁸ According to Mellor, this view was due to the adherence of guidelines on how a woman should be, outlined by Edmund Burke. See *Ibid.*, pp. 108–109.

³⁹ Indeed, Susan Wolfson has challenged Mellor's concrete claims of gender division in the age by positing that 'Romanticism is nothing if not a various, ever shifting force field of gender attractions and performances' and encouraging scholars to view the boundaries of Romantic culture as permeable, flexible, and often subversively theatrical. In my engagement with Scott, Byron, and Landon, I shall adopt this idea of 'borderlines', arguing that composition is not as clear cut as Mellor makes out and that all three of these writers deliberately and theatrically engaged with gender to play and experiment with different readers. See Susan J. Wolfson, *Borderlines: The Shiftings of Gender in British Romanticism*, (Stanford, CA; Stanford University Press, 2006), p. 28.

⁴⁰ See Newlyn, p.vii; and Harold Bloom, *The Anxiety of Influence: A Theory of Poetry*, (Oxford; Oxford University Press, 1973).

⁴¹ Newlyn, p. vii.

For Newlyn, then, ‘far from being oppressed by the burden of the past’, Romantic writers ‘were intensely preoccupied with the combined threat of modernity and futurity’.⁴² That is to say, in place of Bloom’s idea that authors write due to an anxiety of inferiority towards their precursors’ works (making the creative process the anxious repression of their ‘belatedness’), Newlyn posits that writers composed anxiously in response to the power of their audiences, both contemporary and deferred. The early nineteenth century, for Newlyn, was characterised by the ‘the rise of the reader’ which meant authors ‘inhabited a more perilously competitive culture than their forebears’ due to the new power of a mass and anonymous reading public and the decline of patronage.⁴³ Writers were apparently fearful of their power and ownership of the meaning of their texts being usurped by this new ‘reading public’. She thus envisions a ‘defensive and embattled culture’ comprised of ‘successive struggles between authorial and interpretative authority’, an authority challenged by empowered readers and assertive reviewers.⁴⁴ Relying on the goodwill of audiences and reviewers rather than wealthy benefactors, writers thus accordingly ‘looked increasingly to the public for their hopes of survival’ and ‘sought to mould public taste’.⁴⁵ Thus, Newlyn puts forth that ‘Romanticism can be understood as a species of “reaction-formation”—a system of defences against the new power of reading’, although she also acknowledges that such a model cannot be exact.⁴⁶ The three case studies Newlyn offers are of writers who found, for various reasons, problems in reaching and commanding an audience and reacted anxiously to this: Wordsworth, Barbauld, and Coleridge.⁴⁷ However, what Newlyn does not do is consider the model of authorship writers who did achieve acclaim with their contemporary audience adopted in relation to such a precarious period. It is precisely because Byron, Landon, and Scott reacted to the same precariousness in a very different way and achieved extraordinarily different results to her chosen authors, that makes their model of authorship worthy of study. Newlyn’s examples as well as Byron, Scott, and Landon were all reacting to the same phenomenon (producing the ‘reaction-formation’ she details) in that they all had to grapple with the implications of a newly empowered audience. Once popular, though,

⁴² Ibid., p. x.

⁴³ Ibid., p. 3.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Ibid., pp. 3, 8.

⁴⁶ Newlyn acknowledges that her model does not fit perfectly upon readers due to the complexity of the Romantic era. See Ibid., p. xi.

⁴⁷ That said, Newlyn’s study is notably and impressively broad-ranging, taking in shorter discussions of writers such as More, Jewsbury, Hunt, Lamb and Peacock.

Byron, Scott, and Landon had to additionally contend with the idea of their own popularity, folding their consciousness of the need to engage with such huge, diverse constituencies of readers into the construction of their texts in order to maintain their commercial success. It is in this gap in our current knowledge that this thesis plans to sit.

In the last decade, though, a more open understanding of certain authors' relationships with audience and Romantic culture has developed. There is a new interest in print culture, book history, and the phenomenon of celebrity emergent in the Romantic period which, in analysing editorial intervention and influences upon texts, this study must engage with. St Clair's *The Reading Nation* has provided an invaluable resource for scholars wishing to understand print culture and book history in the age, allowing us deeper insights into the practical realities of writing and publishing and its influence on reading and writing, away from the self-mythologising of Romantic writers. Richard Cronin's *Paper Pellets: British Literary Culture After Waterloo* (2010) and John Mee's *Conversable Worlds: Literature, Contention, and Community 1762 to 1830* (2011) build upon St Clair's work by demonstrating how the transitioning literary marketplace of the age was built upon and contributed to a bustling culture of debate, stimulated by the establishment of Britain's Literary and Philosophical Societies, circulating libraries, and reading and debate clubs, intended to expand literacy and knowledge, but also police it in line with the age's morals.⁴⁸ Romanticism, then, in our new understanding, appears to be a more responsive, communicative, and fluid period than we previously imagined. This study shall attempt to marry the very practical realities of print culture, book history, and editorial intervention, to the bustling world of debate and discussion in order to demonstrate how both authors and editors had to acknowledge, engage, and experiment within a world which would actively discuss, judge, and respond to what they were printing.

Such printing decisions in response to the format and nature of reading and debate in the period outlined by St Clair, Mee, and Cronin, produced, some scholars argue, the first example of the modern phenomenon of 'celebrity'. Consequently, scholars like Tom Mole, Ghislaine McDayter, and Robert Mayer have all concentrated on the important role 'celebrity' and its understudied and unpredictable nature has played in

⁴⁸ Whilst Mee questions St Clair's assertion regarding the legislative changes of 1774 and the effects it had upon the literary marketplace (seeing the date as too abrupt and clear cut rather than transitive) he paints a useful image of the period, challenging the image of writers producing in isolation due to the sociability of the volatile period. See Mee, *Conversable Worlds*; and Richard Cronin, *Paper Pellets: British Literary Culture After Waterloo*, (Oxford; Oxford University Press, 2010).

forming popular writers' relationships with audiences.⁴⁹ Paramount to what these studies show is that these three authors' success was built from more than just their texts; it was constructed by their manipulation of their audiences' fascination with their own person, or 'celebrity'. Whilst these three scholars look at authors' texts in order to understand the phenomenon of celebrity, this is an area that does not detain me here. Instead, I shall acknowledge that celebrity acted as an influence on how my three authors engaged with their audiences and the literary marketplace through their texts. I shall analyse how the mechanics of celebrity in an advanced print culture, created by audience and editorial intervention, actually produced and sculpted literature, rather than the other way around. Such a transitional environment may indeed aptly stimulate anxiety in some writers, as Newlyn rightly contends; however, as my study shall demonstrate, it also represented a new age of unpredictable and precarious possibility, that other writers embraced.

An Alternative Relationship?

As I have stated, Newlyn's theory of an 'anxiety of reception' stands as the most important study in relation to this thesis. The paradigm she applies to analyse both the conditions of the Romantic marketplace and careers of the authors she studies is highly effective and appropriate for Wordsworth, Coleridge, and Anna Barbauld (the three case studies she introduces). All three authors found significant difficulty in reaching their contemporary audience, leading them to react anxiously to them and attempt to dictate (or seize power from) or 'mould public taste': the 'reaction-formation' that Newlyn describes. Newlyn insightfully details how such an anxiety created the turn of poets like Wordsworth and Coleridge to writing for a deferred audience, or, as Andrew Bennett labels it, a 'culture of posterity'.⁵⁰ They were ultimately engaged in a fight to determine the terms of their reception and of how their texts were interpreted in response to the

⁴⁹ See Tom Mole, *Byron's Romantic Celebrity: Industrial Culture and the Hermeneutic of Intimacy*, (Basingstoke; Palgrave Macmillan, 2007); and Ghislaine McDayter, *Byromania and the Birth of Celebrity Culture*, (New York, NY; State University Of New York Press, 2009); and Robert Mayer, *Walter Scott and Fame: Authors and Readers in the Romantic Age*, (Oxford; Oxford University Press, 2017).

⁵⁰ Newlyn pp. 3–48; and Andrew Bennett, *Romantic Poets and the Culture of Posterity*, (Cambridge; Cambridge University Press, 1999).

rising power of readers.⁵¹ As she states, ‘Romanticism’s sacralisation of the author’, exemplified by Wordsworth’s privileging of the author as the sole and powerful figure in composition in both the preface to the *Lyrical Ballads* and the ‘Essay Supplementary To The Preface’ (1815), ‘may be seen as arising reactively, out of a resistance to consumerism and anonymity which characterised the publishing world’.⁵² But what of authors whose relationship with contemporary readers was characterized by adulation and huge sales? How can the model of author–reader relations accommodate authors like Byron, Scott, and Landon, who successfully navigated the new conditions of the Romantic literary market to receive wildly popular success in the period?⁵³ How, and in what relationship to audience and the components of the Romantic marketplace, did they compose? Additionally, how did they grapple with the implications of their popularity within an exponentially expanding marketplace?

To answer these questions, I put forward a different perspective to Newlyn’s. I contend that, instead of writing anxiously towards their contemporary audience and thus attempting to dictate the ways their texts were understood, those writers who were popular in the Romantic period embraced the new, vertiginous and varied aspects of Romantic audiences and the literary marketplace in the composition of their texts, actively utilising their awareness of such varied audiences in their creative process. That is to say, instead of attempting to enforce their understanding of their own texts upon audience (or, as Wordsworth posits, ‘the task of creating the taste by which [they were] to be enjoyed’), popular Romantic authors created their texts according to their conceptions of the desires, whims, and demands of their various audiences, as well as the direct interventions of their publishers, the literary marketplace and, more crucially, the variations within and between each of these parties.⁵⁴ In an analysis of Wolfgang Iser’s *The Implied Reader* (1970) and *The Act Of Reading* (1978), Bennett shows that ‘[a]t the heart of Iser’s model of reading is the idea that texts produce uncertainty in readers’

⁵¹ Andrew Franta sums up the motivations of such opinions succinctly by stating ‘the desire to reach an audience becomes a desire to establish, maintain, and expand the domain of the author’s intention’ and identity. See Andrew Franta, *Romanticism and the Rise of the Mass Public*, (Cambridge; Cambridge University Press, 2007), pp. 5–6.

⁵² Newlyn, p. 14.

⁵³ In positioning my own study as an alternative model of authorship to Newlyn’s ‘Anxiety of Reception’, I, too, shall analyse three case studies: Byron, Scott, and Landon. All three authors, unlike Newlyn’s choice of Wordsworth, Coleridge, and Barbauld, experienced huge acclaim with their contemporary audience by adopting the alternate model of authorship I shall describe.

⁵⁴ William Wordsworth, ‘Essay Supplementary To the Preface’ in *The Prose Works of William Wordsworth*, 3 Vols., ed. W.J.B. Owen and Jane Worthington Smyser, (Oxford; Clarendon Press, 1974), vol. 3, p. 80.

comprehension, and that these gaps spur the reader to produce connections which “complete” the text. “Whenever the reader bridges the gaps”, Iser declares, “communication begins”.⁵⁵ Klancher’s intervention is useful here in allowing us to understand that ‘audiences are not simply aggregates of readers. They are complicated social and textual formations; they have interpretative tendencies and ideological contours’.⁵⁶ Romantic audiences were thus divided by a number of factors such as gender, cultural beliefs, or politics, and thus interpreted and reacted to texts in various ways according to these. Just as Klancher posits that ‘[s]tudying them requires us to ask what kind of collective they represent and how an individual reader becomes aware of belonging to a great social audience’, I argue too, that popular authors had to do the same thing: they had to acknowledge different audiences and construct texts that simultaneously addressed these various audiences.⁵⁷ This involved making these audiences an integral aspect of the act of reading and comprehension: the idea of such audiences reading and interpreting popular texts had to be considered during, and built into, textual composition. Popular writers’ texts, then, were self-consciously produced with the presence of huge, anonymous, and variegated audiences in authors’ considerations for the first time. As Mee has demonstrated, the late-eighteenth-century world was an alive realm of debate and correspondence in which readers could directly address their favourite writers through sales, reviews, and correspondence.⁵⁸ With the expanded readership and availability of texts and textual production St Clair describes, this correspondence and opinion, in the Romantic period, was intensified and expanded to an industrial scale. As an implication of their popularity, writers thus received a tumult of opinions and reviews to their texts, forcing them to confront the new reality of the Romantic literary landscape that the idea of such hungry and responsive audiences must play a foundational role in their textual composition. They had to respond to a new culture of readership interested in them precisely due to, and as a result of, their success. Such a dynamic, then, stands as a prime example of what Klancher labels the ‘intricately knotted relationship between reader and writer’.⁵⁹ This relationship, I shall argue, is not often stable. But this instability directly feeds into popular authors’ creativity.

⁵⁵ For an exploration of the ways all texts are dependent upon readers’ interpretations, see Andrew Bennett, *Readers and Reading*, (London; Longman, 1995), p. 20.

⁵⁶ Klancher, *The Making of English Reading Audiences*, p. 6.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 6.

⁵⁸ See Mee, pp. 1–36.

⁵⁹ Klancher, *The Making of English Reading Audiences*, p. 21.

Further to the notion that contemporary audiences act as the centre of popular writers' composition, though, is also the influences Romantic print culture had on the text, especially as the author inhabited a new tenuous location within the rubric of publishing. The period was subject to a new dynamic in which editors like Murray, Constable, or other 'non-authorial agents' had an enormous say in the direction of a text. Mary O'Connell highlights the importance of such agents as well as their undue neglect by contemporary scholars by stating that '[d]espite the function of the publisher in selecting and promoting literature and his role as arbiter of taste, they are often portrayed as parasitical figures profiting from the labours of writers, and are usually characterised as manipulators rather than facilitators of literature'.⁶⁰ Instead of neglecting the interventions of such figures, which were mostly geared towards enhancing a text towards audience enjoyment (and thus higher sales and profits), we must appreciate them as part of the compositional process alongside the author's consideration of audience: they are ultimately one of the voices that produced such 'polyvocal texts'. David Stewart describes magazines as having an 'intense consciousness' of other magazines.⁶¹ Equally, though, popular writers of the period also had an 'intense consciousness' of the literary market. They were aware of rival poets or novelists, other potential publishers and the opportunities they offered, reviews and rising genres, and to the rising power of 'celebrity' as a phenomenon with the relationship to audience that entailed. Whilst I do not intend to contribute to the scholarship on 'celebrity', I shall utilise Mole, McDayter, and Mayer to understand how such a dynamic shaped the compositional process of popular authors and their understanding of audiences.

Ultimately, then, when authors take into account, respond to, or adhere to both the implication of such huge audiences, and, directly, their editors, publishers, or their literary culture's demands, they produce a 'polyvocal text': a text constructed by the multiple creativities and interventions of author, audience(s), and editors. Whilst authors had naturally collaborated with others in the construction of their works in the past, including an audience (directly or imagined), Newlyn and Bennett both highlight that the Romantic era was, due to the newly 'precarious' conditions of the era, characterised by a new-found consciousness by writers that they were confronted by a vast, unknowable

⁶⁰ Mary O'Connell, *Byron and John Murray: A Poet and His Publisher*, (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2014), p. 7.

⁶¹ David Stewart, *Romantic Magazines and Metropolitan Literary Culture*, p. 55.

and unpredictable audience.⁶² Unlike Newlyn and Bennett's focus on authors whose responses were to repress their knowledge of this audience and the literary marketplace, thus turning to a deferred audience, I posit that for Byron, Scott, and Landon, this response was not available. Once their works achieved success, built on the back of contemporary acclaim by audience engagement, they were too popular to postulate the idea that they were free of it. These three writers have not often figured prominently in accounts of Romanticism; part of the reason for that is exactly the internalization of the 'Romantic ideology' McGann describes, whereby critics accept the self-projections of certain, particularly Wordsworthian, strains of Romanticism: as my writers were contemporarily popular, they have been viewed as inferior by scholars. It is precisely the fact that they were popular in the period which makes these authors worthy of such study. Furthermore, it is precisely this popularity which meant that they had to develop different kinds of creative relationships with their publishers and their contemporary audience. Consequently, it is those relationships that form the basis of my thesis. Studying such relationships in depth can assist and complicate the ongoing work in Romantic studies to push beyond the separation of the book-historical study of the publishing industry and the literary-critical study of Romantic creativity. These authors, in the production of their 'polyvocal texts' embraced the influence and implications of audiences divided by tastes and ideologies reading their texts, rather than repressing or rejecting it. Whilst the author, audience, or editors may disagree, this instability in itself, I argue, is the basis of the creative act that produces the texts published by these writers.

A Playful Relationship

Whereas Newlyn bases her thesis on the 'anxiety' of Freudian psychoanalysis, placing an audience as father figure in Oedipal relationship with an 'author-son', this thesis has developed from an initial use of Donald Winnicott's works.⁶³ In *Playing and Reality* (1971), Winnicott suggests that a child learns through playing and testing the limits in relation to their parents.⁶⁴ Winnicott postulates 'a *potential space* between the baby and the mother' which he labels a 'playground'.⁶⁵ Accordingly, for creativity to flourish,

⁶² The description of the new position of writers in the Romantic period as 'precarious' is my own. See Newlyn, pp. 3–23; and Bennett, *Culture of Posterity*, pp. 1–8.

⁶³ See Newlyn, p. x.

⁶⁴ See Donald Winnicott, *Playing and Reality*, (London; Tavistock Publications, 1971), pp. 40–108.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 47.

‘[i]nto this play area the child gathers objects or phenomena from external reality and uses these in the service of some sample derived from inner or personal reality’, thus employing their internal thoughts of external phenomena.⁶⁶ Whilst he studies children’s development, Winnicott’s theory also applies to the ‘whole cultural life of man’ and argues that play ‘manifests itself, for instance, in the choice of words, in the inflections in the voice, and indeed in the sense of humour’.⁶⁷ If we place this into the relationship between an experimenting poet and their audience, then the poet gathers the shared experience of external phenomena (such as current events or Romantic literary culture) and employs them in playing with an audience in order to experiment and push the boundaries of what works and what does not. Creativity is collaborative and playful, a matter of relationship, rather than a matter of dominance or control.

As discussed, the Romantic period was an age of unpredictable, splintered audiences in which writers were struggling to understand their new place within a new system of literary production and commerce. I suggest that, in searching for an understanding of their relationship to an anonymous and varied audience, and within a new mercantile environment in which success was engendered by sales, popular writers developed a playful relationship with their audience, their editors, and Romantic literary culture to experiment and better refine those relationships and subsequently the success of their works. Whilst audience and Romantic literary culture was at the centre of popular authors’ creativity, play and experimentation was frequently their response to it, rather than anxiety. However, no psychoanalytical model perfectly fits the composition processes of authors. I am not suggesting that we enforce Winnicott’s model of an author as child developing a relationship to an ‘audience–mother’ onto popular Romantic authors.⁶⁸ Instead, I wish to borrow the notion that in such a precarious period for authors, open play and experimentation in relation to audience, editors, and literary culture was

⁶⁶ Ibid., p. 51.

⁶⁷ Ibid., pp. 40, 102.

⁶⁸ Rita Felski aptly warns us against forcing critique onto literary texts by stating that it ‘primes us to look closely at current ways of reading rather than through them, taking them seriously in their own terms rather than seeing them as the symptoms of more fundamental realities (hidden anxieties, institutional forces)’ and that we should rather ‘place ourselves in front of the text, reflecting on what it unfurls, calls forth, makes possible’. Whilst, obviously, by analysing the composition of texts I will be looking ‘behind the text’, heeding Felski’s warnings, it is what the text brings forth for readers that I am most interested in: that my chosen writers were constantly conscious of the involvement of audience in interpreting and thus ‘completing’ the text and thus made their text importantly entertaining and able to playfully encourage (often unguided) audience speculation and response. See Rita Felski, *The Limits of Critique*, (Chicago, IL; University Of Chicago Press, 2015), pp. 1–12.

the response that contributed to create and maintain certain authors' popularity. Audience desire, interpretation, and response was central to their creativity, but rather than being anxious about it, Landon, Scott, and Byron toyed and experimented with these things in pursuit of their success.

With such playful experimentation, authors could thus invite their audiences and Romantic literary culture into the composition of their texts as creative considerations and even partners. As I shall demonstrate, Byron, Landon, and Scott all utilise various public personae to respond and test in relation to their audience and literary culture. This use of personae was a form of playing and experimentation in the face of a newly intrusive audience and the buffeting conditions of the literary marketplace. I shall also demonstrate, by analysing fan-mail, contemporary opinions, and reviews of these authors, how their various audiences consciously accepted that their idols were 'playing' with them, and engaged in the game themselves. That is to say, in their responses to these authors, they display an awareness of the playful nature of the texts, and respond imaginatively and playfully themselves.

Different Authors, Different Relationships: Case Studies

In demonstrating the co-operative or democratic compositional process of popular Romantic writers, I shall explore three case studies: Byron, Scott, and Landon. All three writers were bestselling authors throughout their career and are subsequently being reexamined because of this as well as the new focus on the study of celebrity as a phenomenon. All three displayed a keen awareness of the composition of their audiences, especially a newly empowered female readership, as well as the precarious, mercantile conditions in which they worked. Their success was, as I shall show, built upon their willingness to shape their texts to effectively engage and respond to such a vast audience and the new conditions of Romantic authorship, inviting such components into their works as creative partners and influences. These case studies shall explore periods of each author's careers, examining how they adapted their works to suit their evolving relationships with audience, editors, and Romantic literary culture. With that in mind, I have divided each case study into three chapters, which will discuss their careers in loosely chronological stages. Due to the limitations upon this thesis, I have chosen to select those periods, works, or developments in each authors' career which best exemplify their playful and collaborative compositional processes.

All of my selected authors represent a model of authorship that proved wildly successful and advantageous in the conditions of the Romantic era. All three made consideration of a newly enlarged and varied Romantic audience central to their creativity, composing their texts in accordance with audiences as well as contemporary cultural attitudes, literary trends, and the input of components of the printing industry. In his study on Byron's celebrity, Mole claims that 'any analysis of celebrity culture should be built on the three pillars of an industry, and an individual and an audience'.⁶⁹ This model is useful. Although I do not focus centrally on celebrity, this study shall look at how these components—or at least an intense consideration of these components—contributed in the production of my chosen authors' texts. This creative process produced 'polyvocal' products, with input from (to borrow Mole's terms) an industry, author, and that author's awareness of a new culture of readership constituted by enormous, diverse audiences. Whilst Byron, Landon, and Scott all experienced brief periods of disillusionment due to these bonds and the resultant model of authorship, each could not have been as successful without them.

Case Study One: Lord Byron

I shall begin with Byron.⁷⁰ Byron was the bestselling poet of the era and was, for a few years, unrivalled in sales. His first two cantos of *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage: A Romance* (1812) sold over 5,000 copies in the first six months, a feat bested by *The Corsair* (1814) selling 10,000 copies on the first day of publication and 25,000 over the total of its print run.⁷¹ This was largely down to what scholars label 'Byronism'.⁷² That is

⁶⁹ Mole, p. 3.

⁷⁰ I analyse Byron before Scott (who was wildly successful first) in my case studies due to Scott's switch to novel writing in response to Byron's success as an example of authors responding to the conditions of the print market.

⁷¹ For Byron's print runs during the Romantic period, see St Clair, *Reading Nation*, pp. 585–590; and Everest, p. 71.

⁷² Scholars have attributed to 'Byronism' a number of slightly different meanings, though I shall broadly follow Ghislaine McDayter's definition of it as an 'extraliterary event'. For example, Tom Mole describes 'Byromania' or 'Byronism' as an effect of Byron's use of a 'Hermeneutic Of Intimacy' in which Byron's audience could imagine themselves as intimate partners with Byron through their knowledge of his life, and in how Byron transferred their sexual desire towards his characters through 'somatic inscription' onto himself in *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage: A Romance* (1812–1818) and his *Eastern Tales*. See Mole, pp. 1–28, 61–77; McDayter describes 'Byromania' as an 'extraliterary event' defined by the fact that it was not just Byron's texts that were desired, but also his person. Her account is different to Mole's in that she argues that readers did not necessarily desire Byron sexually, but rather that Byron's texts allowed their own desires to be explored. See McDayter, *Byromania*, pp. 1–22. Jerome Christensen suggests that

to say that Byron was not just celebrated for his works, but also his own public persona, his biography, his effects on Romantic literary culture, and the effects these had upon his audience. Consequently, in my examination, I shall analyse how Byron's texts constructed and responded to these factors, which were, as I shall demonstrate, frequently beyond his control.

My first chapter shall contend that Byron's early career was guided by a desire to sculpt public opinion of himself.⁷³ In it, I shall examine *Hours Of Idleness* (1807), the response it provoked from *The Edinburgh Review*, and how this response resulted in *English Bards And Scotch Reviewers* (1809).

In Chapter Two, I shall analyse *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* as well as a selection of Byron's Eastern Tales in order to demonstrate that the period of 1812–1818 represented one in which Byron's relationship with audience evolved substantially in coordination with his new publisher John Murray. Drawing on archival materials, work by McDayter, and the research of Corin Throsby on Byron's fan-mail, I shall show how audience response flew in the face of Murray and Byron's attempt at guiding audience interpretation, and eventually led to frustration on Byron's part.⁷⁴

In Chapter Three, I shall show how this instability increasingly prompted resistance from Byron, which then frustrated Murray, and would eventually lead to the playful experimentation of *Beppo: A Venetian Tale* (1818) and *Don Juan* (1819–1824), as well as the break-up of the pair's publishing relationship in 1823. Throughout all of these chapters, though, I shall demonstrate how Byron's poetry is the product of an occasionally stormy but fundamentally collaborative relationship that involves Byron, Murray, and an impressively diverse audience.

Case Study Two: Sir Walter Scott

Discussing Scott, St Clair demonstrates that '[d]uring the Romantic period, the "Author of Waverley" sold more novels than all the other novelists of the time put together'.⁷⁵

'Byronism' was the 'coding [of the] residual affective charge that still clung to the paraphernalia of aristocracy in order to reproduce it in commodities that could be vended to a reading public avid for glamour'. See Jerome Christensen, *Lord Byron's Strength: Romantic Writing and Commercial Society*, (Baltimore, MD; Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993), pp. xvi–xvii.

⁷³ For examples of the type of argument I will be following initially, see Christensen, pp. 19–33; and Mole, pp. 44–60.

⁷⁴ See McDayter, *Byromania*; and Corin Throsby, 'Flirting with Fame: Byron's Anonymous Female Fans' in *The Byron Journal*, Vol. 32, Issue 2, (2004), pp. 115–123.

⁷⁵ St Clair, *Reading Nation*, p. 221.

Waverley; Or, 'Tis Sixty Years Since (1814), Scott's first, had an eventual print run in the period of 51,500 copies making it one of the era's most popular texts by far.⁷⁶

Whilst he achieved huge acclaim for his poetry, my examination of Scott's career shall consider only his career as an anonymous or pseudonymous novelist: from *Waverley's* publication, until he was forced to reveal his authorship in *The Chronicles Of the Canongate* in 1827.⁷⁷

Chapter Four, then, shall examine how Scott's turn from poetry to the novel and his choice to publish both *Waverley* and *The Antiquary* (1816) anonymously was a direct response to the conditions of the Romantic literary marketplace. Within *Waverley* and *The Antiquary*, I shall also show the origins of Scott's playful and inclusive relationship with audience in which he acknowledges both the new power of an expanded 'reading public' and the variety of interpretations such an audience can produce from his texts.

Chapter Five shall then focus on his novels from 1816–1824, the period in which Scott fully builds a paratextual world of authorship and creates authorial personae such as 'The Author Of Waverley'. I shall demonstrate how these multiple levels of fiction were utilised by Scott to negotiate better material terms between his publishers, to obscure his own identity, and to playfully engage, provoke and respond to his varied audience. Furthermore, I shall use previously unconsidered fan-mail from the archives of the National Library of Scotland to demonstrate that Scott's audience playfully responded to Scott's game in turn: an implication of Scott's popularity and a result of his incorporation of his awareness of varied audiences into his compositional considerations. Whilst these responses do not directly intervene in Scott's texts, they offer us examples of how Scott successfully negotiated the implications of his fame amidst a new Romantic culture of assertive and varied readerships.

In my final Scott chapter (Chapter Six), I shall analyse his novels that appeared from 1825 to 1827 in the light of the economic crash of 1825, particularly the prefaces to *The Betrothed* (1825) and *Woodstock* (1826). I end my discussion of Scott with *The*

⁷⁶ *Guy Mannering* (1815), Scott's second novel, was actually his most printed novel in the period due to the initial and huge interest in the anonymous author for *Waverley* with a run of 67,000 copies. Indeed, Scott's publisher, Constable, ordered an average 10,000 copies for each initial edition of a Scott novel, more than most authors sold in a lifetime. For Scott's print run figures, see St Clair, *Reading Nation*, pp. 246, 632–644.

⁷⁷ My choice to study a selection of Scott's novels is due to the fact that it is with his turn to the genre in which his most fascinating relationship with audience, editors, and Romantic literary culture unfolds.

Chronicles Of The Canongate (1827) as, with his unmasking, Scott's playful and experimental relationship with his audience and literary culture came to an end. Throughout, I shall demonstrate how, whilst Scott developed a playful and collaborative model of authorship like Byron, his own concerns surrounding the gender of his readers and the cultural status of the novel ultimately led him to establish a unique celebrity built on fluid use of personae.

Case Study Three: Letitia Landon

Debuting as 'L.' in *The Literary Gazette* in 1820, and eventually appearing regularly under the pseudonym 'L.E.L.', Landon helped elevate it to a readership of 4,000 every week.⁷⁸ She was the most successful female poet of the era, with sales figures that outstrip other more celebrated, canonical male competitors.⁷⁹ Thus I shall discuss examples of her longer poetry, her engagement with literary annuals, and her turn to the 'silver fork novel' later in her career. Not only did Landon, in particular, have to consider a fractured audience divided by gender, but she also had to navigate the male-dominated world of Romantic literary culture with the attendant cultural stigmas attached to a female poet.

Chapter Seven shall thus begin with a discussion of Landon's early collaboration with her first publisher William Jerdan, as well as an exploration of her seminal work *The Improvisatrice* (1824). I will build upon studies by Anne Mellor and Glennis Stephenson to argue that Landon self-consciously creates a poetry of pretence which appeals to readers by allowing them to construct and believe in Landon as an ideal of their own gendered and societal conceptions.⁸⁰

⁷⁸ Part of Landon's success, I shall show, was built on the back of her varied use of literary mediums in the period. Landon utilised formats such as *The Gazette*, volumes of poetry (with her *Golden Violet* (1827) selling 3000 copies, more than most other male poets apart from the likes of Byron, Scott or Thomas Moore), novels (such as *Romance And Reality* (1831)), and the increasingly popular literary annuals of the late Romantic period. She was estimated to have made a minimum of £250 per annum and a total of £2,585 from her career, more than any other female writer despite the limitations placed upon women. For Landon's print runs, see St Clair, *Reading Nation*, pp. 615–616; for her profits, see William Jerdan, *The Autobiography Of William Jerdan*, 4 Vols., (London; 1835), vol. 3, p. 185; and for a description of *The Gazette*, including the figures I have quoted, see Daniel Riess, 'Laetitia Landon and the Dawn of English Post-Romanticism' in *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900*, Vol. 36, Issue 4, (1996), pp. 807–827 (pp. 809–810).

⁷⁹ Her texts certainly outstripped the sales of Keats, Shelley, Coleridge, Blake, or Wordsworth in their lifetimes. For Landon's print runs, see St Clair, *Reading Nation*, pp. 615–616.

⁸⁰ Mellor, *Romanticism and Gender*; and Glennis Stephenson, *Letitia Landon: The Woman Behind L.E.L.* (Manchester; Manchester University Press, 1995); and Stephenson, 'Letitia Landon

Chapter Eight shall examine an alternative pose Landon takes in her poetry, though: a persona that created an underlying and often overlooked layer of rebellious play, whereby the Romantic notions of her ‘commercial’ audience were critiqued and mocked. Expanding upon the arguments of Angela Leighton and others, I shall explore *The Improvisatrice*, *The Golden Violet* (1827) and *The Troubadour* (1825) to examine the games Landon plays with an audience that she acknowledges is divided in their desires.⁸¹

My final chapter of this thesis (Chapter Nine) shall then analyse Landon’s mobile use of identity in the era’s literary annuals, particularly *Fisher’s Drawing Room Scrapbook* (1832–1839), *Heath’s Book Of Beauty* (1833), and *Forget Me Not* (1824), as well as the change in tactics she executed when switching to ‘silver fork’ novelist late in her career with *Romance and Reality* (1831).⁸²

Throughout, I shall demonstrate how Landon consistently worked to the ideal that the quotation with which this thesis begins communicates: that her poetry was always built upon the foundation of a ‘touch’ between herself and her contemporary audience. Such an ideal thus made her texts the responsive products of the intersection of forces in the late Romantic print market at the centre of which sits a large, varied audience.

and the Victorian Improvisatrice: The Construction of L.E.L’ in *Victorian Poetry*, Vol. 30, Issue 1, (Spring 1992), pp. 1–17.

⁸¹ See Angela Leighton, *Victorian Women Poets: Writing Against the Heart*, (London; Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1992), pp. 45–71.

⁸² I shall show how Landon’s use of mobile identity is similar to Scott’s.

Case Study One: Lord Byron

Chapter One: Byron's Early Career - *Hours Of Idleness* (1807) to *English Bards And Scotch Reviewers* (1809)

Remarking upon his contemporary literary culture, Byron's hero Alexander Pope stated in 1730:

I believe, if anyone, early in his life should contemplate the dangerous fate of authors, he would scarce be of their number on any consideration. The life of a wit is a warfare on Earth.¹

Rising to Pope's challenge, Byron indeed took up the 'dangerous fate' of becoming an author 'early in his life' and was faced with a volley a criticism when he published his first volume of poems, *Hours Of Idleness* (1807), from the influential *Edinburgh Review* and its discerning contributor Henry Brougham. Reflecting on his own response to *The Edinburgh* as well as John Keats' recent death in 1821, Byron commented:

I know by experience that a savage review is Hemlock to a sucking author—and the one on me—which produced *English Bards &c.*) knocked me down—but I got up again—Instead of bursting a blood vessel—I drank three bottles of Claret—and began an answer.²

His response is a telling one. Caught up in his own personal mythology and contemplating 'the dangerous fate of authors' when audience is invited to engage with and interpret both texts and their authors, the poet embellishes his recollection of Brougham's review of *Hours Of Idleness* with a resilient and martial masculinity. 'Answer' back Byron did, but his response in *English Bards And Scotch Reviewers* (1809) represents more than just the frustrations of a young lord in response to a bad review.

¹ Quoted in Jerome Christensen, *Lord Byron's Strength: Romantic Writing and Commercial Society*, (Baltimore, MD; Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993), p. 19.

² Keats' death was widely attributed in the period to have been caused by a series of negative reviews to his works directed his way. Adhering to this view, Percy Shelley's *Adonais: An Elegy On The Death of John Keats, Author Of Endymion, Hyperion, Etc.* (1821) stands as an example of such Keats' mythology which Byron came into contact with and responded to. See Byron, 'To John Murray, 26 April 1821' in *Byron's Letters and Journals*, vol. 8, p. 102.

Building upon the arguments of Jerome Christensen, I wish to present Byron's writing of *English Bards* as one side of a struggle between the young lord and the *Edinburgh Review* over the terms of reception and self-representation in the public eye.³ I will also contend that *The Edinburgh's* review and Byron's response in *English Bards* represents a moment of realisation and learning for the young poet: that the introverted poetry of *Hours Of Idleness* which relied upon the class privilege Christensen identifies, was no longer appropriate for an emerging, more democratised capitalist literary marketplace in which an awareness of audience (represented by *The Edinburgh*) must inevitably play a foundational creative influence in the construction of poetry. That is to say, whereas with *Hours Of Idleness*, Byron deliberately neglected a mass audience as a factor in his composition due to his outdated views on aristocratic poetry, Brougham's review forced him to confront the reality that all authors in the early Romantic period had to engage, experiment with, and respond to, a newly enlarged, empowered, and anonymous audience. *English Bards* thus constitutes Byron's development of Pope's eighteenth-century satire, tweaked and deployed within a radically new context (driven by a vast new audience and discerning reviews). Whilst the poem stands as an explicit rejection of *The Edinburgh*, it implicitly mirrors the periodical's techniques and accepts Brougham's lesson, incorporating the new mass-audience of the Romantic-era into Byron's compositional considerations for the first time.

In the same letter as earlier, Byron recollected the effects of Brougham's review in terms that echo Pope's earlier statement: 'It was rage, and resistance, and redress—but not despondency nor despair. I grant that those are not amiable feelings; but, in this world of bustle and broil, and especially in the career of writing, a man should calculate on his powers of resistance before he enters the arena'.⁴ Written privately in his journal, Byron never intended this statement as a guiding principle on how to read his works, but it does reveal his underlying desires regarding how his audience perceived him: as one possessing an assertive, aristocratic, literary machismo who would (after learning his lesson) always engage with and respond to literary culture. As I shall demonstrate, *English Bards* stands as an example of Byron pushing this public perception of himself, an intention that would evolve in his later works.

I shall explore *English Bards* because this poem, more than any other of his early works, exposes the dynamics of early nineteenth-century literary culture and how Byron adapted to address them, despite finding parts of that culture problematic. In his

³ See Christensen, pp. 32–49.

⁴ See Byron, 'To John Murray, 26 April 1821' in *Byron's Letters and Journals*, vol. 8, p. 103.

response to *The Edinburgh*, Byron highlights the contextual pressures that authors encountered in the period which apparently corrupted their works. The poem is useful in understanding the influences Byron would negotiate in *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage, A Romaunt* (1812–1818) and his *Eastern Tales*, and that led to a reevaluation of his career after 1816. In other words, Byron realised that he had, in fully embracing the literary marketplace in those later works, become that which he had railed against in *English Bards*.

Additionally, the cultural context under which Byron and his contemporaries wrote bred an atmosphere of competition and class anxieties. These tensions underpinned how Byron wished to be perceived and how his audience, often at odds with this wish, actually interpreted him and his works throughout his career. Upon entering this 'arena', Byron took his first blow, and with *English Bards*, he adopted a creative process which invoked, engaged, and experimented with his audience and which came to define 'Byronism', thus creating his pioneering celebrity. Brougham's poor review of *Hours Of Idleness* was ultimately the defining moment in Byron's career. From *English Bards* onwards, Byron would utilise various techniques to experiment with his identity and to form a public image that ensured that he, and his future publisher John Murray, would achieve unprecedented success and breed a 'culture of celebrity'.⁵ As I will exhibit, though, when those texts were handed over to the public, guiding their assumptions and interpretations proved difficult. Faced with a loss of control over his own representation later in his career due to the celebrity culture he and Murray had helped construct (as well as facing the demands of that audience), Byron would go on to play, experiment with, and obscure his identity through theatricality and inconsistent characters in both *Beppo: A Venetian Tale* (1818) and *Don Juan* (1819–1824).

The following chapters, then, shall demonstrate how Byron navigated the pressures and instabilities of the bonds between the three creative elements that were behind his texts' composition throughout his career: poet, publisher, and audience. In doing so, the first chapter will examine Byron's creative realisation between *Hours of Idleness* and *English Bards*; my second chapter shall analyse Murray and Byron's complementary attempts to dictate a public perception and reading of 'Byron' with *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage, Cantos I and II* (1812) as well as the *Eastern Tales*, and their subsequent failure in the face of a powerful and unstable audience; whilst my final chapter will ex-

⁵ See Tom Mole, *Byron's Romantic Celebrity: Industrial Culture and the Hermeneutic of Intimacy*, (Basingstoke; Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), p. xiv.

plore the poet's response in *Beppo* and *Don Juan* to the publishing pair's failure to govern the way audiences read Byron's texts, as well as Murray and Byron's diverging visions for his works and reputation.

Along similar lines to a number of Byron critics such as Tom Mole and Ghislaine MacDayter, I will argue that Byron lost control of his own self-image in the public sphere, especially during his chaotic life events of 1816, which led to his eventual frustration. This led to another moment of realisation for the poet regarding his texts and their engagement with audience. I propose that this realisation regarding the lack of control Byron had over his own public identity manifested itself in the theatricality and uncertainty of *Beppo* and *Don Juan*. Indeed, Byron did not reject his various, contemporary audiences with these texts, as Mole, MacDayter, Christensen, and others have concluded; instead he utilised their interpretations of 'Byron' and his former works, including this loss of control over his own public identity, as part of his compositional process, thus playing with his readers and their traditional reading methods.

Whilst Byron often framed his relationship to Romantic literary culture in militaristic terms (particularly in *English Bards*), his relationship with his audience and his publisher, Murray, was actually largely one of productive brokerage. That is to say that whilst the three parties often held unaligned and shifting ideas and desires for Byron's works, they all regularly negotiated and compromised in order to fashion a finished text which could be sold effectively. Byron's unstable contact with his literary culture, then, acted as a creative influence upon his works and his reception.

A Lesson Learnt

Away with themes like this! not mine the task
From flattering friends to tear the hateful mask;
Let keener bards delight in Satire's sting,
My Fancy soars not on Detraction's wing:
Once, and but once, she aim'd a deadly blow,
To hurl Defiance on a secret Foe;
But when that foe, from feeling or from shame,
The cause unknown, yet still to me the same,
Warn'd by some friendly hint, perchance, retir'd,

With this submission all her rage expired.⁶

Evident in ‘Childish Recollections’, one of Byron’s first published poems in *Hours Of Idleness*, is the fact that the young poet was already aware of the ‘world of bustle and broil’ he was to enter. Unlike those ‘keener bards’ who ‘delight in Satire’s sting’, Byron’s young ‘fancy’ soars not by tearing down others. Indeed, claiming neither to rely on ‘flattering friends’ and or a ‘mask’, as some Romantic era actors do, Byron earlier outlines the reasons for why ‘satire’s sting’ and masks may be such an attractive prospects to some:

Hypocrisy, the gift of lengthen’d years,
Matured by age, the garb of Prudence wears:
When, now, the Boy is ripen’d into Man,
His careful Sire chalks forth some wary plan;
Instructs his Son from Candour’s path to shrink,
Smoothly to speak, and cautiously to think;
Still to assent, and never to deny—
A patron’s praise can well reward the lie⁷

Hypocrisy, masks, and barbs are all apparently justified by a ‘patron’s praise’. The lines stand as an early example of Byron’s awareness over the role of reviewers, literary attacks, and patronage in the emerging cultural moment of the early nineteenth-century. In a letter to Edward Noel Long in 1807, Byron remarks that he ‘would rather [have] passed the ordeal of an Edinburgh Review, than offered my unfortunate “Juvenilia” to his Inspection’.⁸ In a similar statement to William Bankes, the poet feels ‘no hesitation in saying, I was more anxious to hear your Critique however severe, than the praises of the Million’.⁹ The undercurrents that Byron’s early poetry and letters reveal is a residual aristocratic attitude to poetry and publication, an attitude that would ultimately lead to his battle with *The Edinburgh*, and an attitude that Christensen suggests runs throughout

⁶ Lord Byron, ‘Childish Recollections’ in *Lord Byron: The Complete Poetical Works*, ed. Jerome McGann, 7 Vols., (Oxford; Oxford University Press, 1980-1993), vol. 1, ll. 77–86.

⁷ Ibid., ll. 65–72.

⁸ Byron, ‘To Edward Noel Long, 23 February 1807’ in *Byron’s Letters and Journals*, vol. 1, p. 109.

⁹ Byron, ‘To William Bankes, 6 March 1807’ in Ibid., p. 111.

Byron's career and led to his success.¹⁰

Christensen claims that 'Byronism' was characterised by 'coding the residual affective charge that still clung to the paraphernalia of aristocracy in order to reproduce it in commodities that could be vended to a reading public avid for glamour'.¹¹ Byron's lack of care for the opinions of the 'Million[s]' demonstrates his lordly attitude towards the purpose of poetry. Even the title, *Hours Of Idleness*, suggests that the works he had commissioned for publication were simply a pastime for a young aristocrat, though, it is in the Preface where Byron's outdated views towards his contemporary literary culture are most evident. The poet demonstrates he is aware of the risks of publishing by comparing himself to Caesar crossing the Rubicon.¹² Yet Byron's opening statements adopt an assumption that his poems (and their faults) will be viewed sympathetically due to his age and status by labelling them 'fruits of the lighter hours of a young man, who has lately completed his nineteenth year' and by announcing poetry as not his 'primary vocation'. Furthermore, he quotes Samuel Johnson that 'when a man of rank appeared in the character of an author, he deserved to have his merit handsomely allowed'.¹³ Here Byron is already preempting the possibility that his poems may be received badly and thus asking that his age be taken into account for a sympathetic reading. Additionally, he assumes that his 'rank' will lend him considerable weight in assuring him of acclaim from an audience he intends not to address again. Such comments neglect entirely the role the market plays in forming literary acclaim, despite Byron's knowledge of that market's judges: the reviewers. Despite attacking those 'Matured by age' of 'Hypocrisy, the gift of lengthen'd years', Byron asks for a pardon based on his age.

It is these residual attitudes towards class and literary culture to which *The Edinburgh* took such affront.¹⁴ The preface to *Hours Of Idleness* is typical of a preface to the early effusions of poets of the previous century, but Byron was entering into a new literary culture armed with dated viewpoints. Byron's citing of aristocracy as a cultural signifier suggests there is a deeper tension in his dispute with *The Edinburgh* which is directly connected to class and its changing roles in Romantic society. As I have high-

¹⁰ See Christensen, pp. 32–49.

¹¹ Ibid., pp. xvi–xvii.

¹² Lord Byron, 'Preface' to *Hours Of Idleness* in *Lord Byron: The Complete Poetical Works*, vol. 1, p. 32.

¹³ Ibid., pp. 32, 33, 34.

¹⁴ Brougham's review of Byron is even more remarkable in that it represents one of the few times he chose to attack a literary work rather than contribute other material for *The Edinburgh*. See William Christie, 'Going Public: Print Lords Byron and Brougham' in *Romanticism*, Vol. 38, Issue 3, (Fall 1999), pp. 443–475.

lighted in my introduction, the emergence of an educated middle class in Romantic Britain meant that the literary culture of the day pandered more to that audience than the traditional aristocracy. William St Clair highlights importantly that, whereas a literary volume may be owned in one very expensive edition by one family, other copies such as those in libraries or literary societies were likely to be circulated amongst hundreds of mainly middle-class hands. For example, 'for years after the arrival in the library in 1812 of Byron's *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*, there was scarcely a gap between its return from its fortnight with one member and its leaving with another'.¹⁵ With the explosion of print culture and the volume of material, this middle class also demanded proper guidance on which texts were worth reading, which is where the other party in Byron's dispute originates.

Throughout the eighteenth century reviews had proliferated and grown in number and popularity, but a decisive shift in the history of periodical culture arrived in 1802 with the founding of *The Edinburgh Review*.¹⁶ Marilyn Butler highlights that before *The Edinburgh*, periodicals such as *The Monthly Review* (began in 1749), reviewed almost all of the printed works of the day due to the limited amount of texts produced in the century (before the publishing boom of the Romantic period) and often simply by extracting or summarising a book's contents: a practice known as 'padding'.¹⁷ *The Edinburgh's* reviewers were mostly lawyers with political ambitions like the editor Francis Jeffrey (whom Byron inaccurately attributed its review to) and were, for the first time, highly paid professionals who applied their skills to deliver something different to their audience: reviews which selected and analysed noteworthy texts for their merits (rather than 'padding'), often comparing them to other writers (if *The Edinburgh* chose to review literature at all, which in many issues it did not).¹⁸ As a response to the increased demand of a middle class for literary guidance amongst a vastly expanded print market,

¹⁵ St Clair, *Reading Nation*, p. 254.

¹⁶ For more about the revolution that *The Edinburgh* brought about in reviewing, see Roper, *Reviewing Before The Edinburgh 1788-1802*.

¹⁷ As I have stated in the introduction to this thesis, published by Archibald Constable, and constructed by a small group of Whig intellectuals to revive whiggish ideals, according to Butler, *The Edinburgh* would grow to reach an estimated subscription of around 13,000 at its peak in 1814, outstripping sales of eighteenth-century reviews like *The Monthly Review* (3,500 copies sold) or *The British Critic* (3,500 copies) substantially at their respective peaks. For more on the founding of *The Edinburgh Review*, see Marilyn Butler, 'Culture's Medium: The Role Of The Review', pp. 127–152; and Roper; and for the print runs of the major periodicals of the day throughout the Romantic period, see St.Clair, p. 573.

¹⁸ For each contribution, *The Edinburgh's* publisher, Constable, often paid £200 or more per article, meaning contributions were often lucrative for lawyers like Jeffrey.

came supply in the form of the discerning journals of the early nineteenth century. As David Stewart highlights, ‘*The Edinburgh*’s bullish declaration in its advertisement that it would review only those publications “that either have retained, or deserve, a certain portion of celebrity” might be considered an expression of modesty rather than arrogance. Eighteenth-century periodicals had tried to review everything that was published, but *The Edinburgh* realised that, in a massively expanded print economy, it could no longer cope.’¹⁹ According to Butler, the ‘seductively readable style of “slashing” criticism for which the *Edinburgh* became famous was a weapon almost entirely reserved for popular writing’, and led to *The Edinburgh* adopting a ‘snobbish’ stance in order to construct ‘an upmarket yet culturally receptive version of “the world”’.²⁰ *The Edinburgh* then, both sculpted taste via its selection and reviewing of literary texts whilst simultaneously, as Jon Klancher suggests, forming a readership that would rely on its opinions in order to decide their own views, tastes, and selection of texts.²¹

Due to the review’s position as an arbiter of taste for the middle classes run by professionals, it is little wonder that *The Edinburgh* took issue with Byron pulling rank and using age as a reason for a positive reception, bypassing their own role.²² In his response to Byron’s prefatory pleas for lenience in review, Brougham stated:

[Lord Byron] takes care to remember us of Dr. Johnson’s saying, that when a nobleman appears as an author, his merit should be handsomely acknowledged. In truth, it is this consideration only, that induces us to give Lord Byron’s poems a place in our review, beside our desire to counsel him, that he do forthwith abandon poetry, and turn his talents, which are considerable, and his opportunities, which are great, to better account.²³

As Peter Graham points out, ‘Brougham adopt[ed] a common sense tone and allow[ed] the adolescent author’s own prefatory and poetic words to damn him’.²⁴ Brougham thus selects *Hours Of Idleness* from the scores of published works, based on Byron’s claim

¹⁹ David Stewart, *Romantic Magazines and Metropolitan Literary Culture*, p. 4.

²⁰ Butler, ‘Culture’s Medium: The Role Of The Review’, pp. 138, 143.

²¹ See Klancher, *The Making of English Reading Audiences*, pp. 18–46.

²² Christie provides a compelling account of why Brougham and Byron sparred also due to their differences of opinion on the direction of Whig politics. See Christie, pp. 443–475.

²³ *The Edinburgh Review*, Vol. 11, (October 1807), pp. 283–289.

²⁴ Peter Graham, ‘Byron And The Business Of Publishing’ in *The Cambridge Companion to Byron*, ed. Drummond Bone, (Cambridge; Cambridge University Press, 2004), p. 29.

that ‘when a nobleman appears as an author, his merit should be handsomely acknowledged’, yet then signifies the cultural shift *The Edinburgh Review* represents. He advises the young Lord to exercise the ‘opportunities’ his aristocracy affords him outside of the literary world, as it is evidently only Byron’s claims of cultural authority and not his poetic talents that have attracted *The Edinburgh’s* attention. In other words, the literary world had changed and Byron’s aristocracy no longer counted as a guarantor of public taste. The distinction here then is that the middle-class-run *Edinburgh’s* selection of Lord Byron’s *Hours Of Idleness* represented not just a review but a newly established middle-class journal picking a young aristocrat’s publication to attack. This was because it failed to meet middle-class standards of literary distinction because his works represented poetic labour as ‘idleness’, citing youth (even going so far as to suggest youth meant he could not be hypocritical) and aristocratic privilege as cultural authority, rather than the abundantly remunerated work provided by the professional reviewers. The battle of *English Bards* would be framed then (through Byron’s eyes, anxious of his own aristocratic status) as between an emerging organ of the middle class against the authority of an aristocrat over the very terms of reception. Who, in other words, would the audience listen to?

As Christensen argues, Brougham borrowed legal terminology and the anonymous reviewing method to create the impression that what Jon Klancher calls the ‘corporate voice’ of *The Edinburgh* was an instrument of disinterested cultural judgment.²⁵ This clash of *The Edinburgh* and Byron’s *Hours Of Idleness* highlights two views of cultural authority (disinterested, impartial, and analytical judgment vs. aristocratic privilege) that are especially prominent in the Romantic era. Citing Michel Foucault, Christensen outlines these two types of power: the first argues that ‘power is taken to be a right, which one is able to possess like a commodity, and which one can in consequence transfer or alienate’ whilst the other is ‘neither given, nor exchanged, nor recovered, but rather exercised, and that ... only exists in action, [a power] that is above all a relation of force’.²⁶ By selecting *Hours Of Idleness* for review, and by employing anonymous legal rhetoric in its critique, *The Edinburgh* is representative of the latter description: it is seizing cultural authority for the professional classes by exercising its power. They

²⁵ Christensen, p. 30; and Klancher, ‘Reading the Social Text: Power, Signs, and Audience in Early Nineteenth-Century Prose’ in *Studies in Romanticism*, Vol. 23, No. 2, (Summer, 1984), pp. 183–204 (p. 199).

²⁶ See Michel Foucault, *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings*, ed. Colin Gordon, trans. Gordon, (New York, NY; Pantheon, 1980), pp. 88–89, quoted in Christensen, p. 4.

understood power as a dynamic that could only shift by constant publication and by defining abstractions like ‘taste’. Byron, on the other hand, in *Hours Of Idleness*, represents the first description of power whereby cultural authority should stem from the inherited rights of his aristocratic status. It is due to the uniquely precarious circumstances of the Romantic period that such tensions could clash so publicly due to the changing roles of class, and more particularly the new dominance of professional over social power in British society. As we shall see, though, in *English Bards, The Edinburgh* had taught Byron that, in an expanding marketplace governed by the middle class, it was only through the exercising of power (like *The Edinburgh*), or by addressing and engaging this new audience, that Byron could thrive literarily. As his career developed, Byron realised that he would have to accommodate himself to both changing cultural conditions and an ever shifting audience to whom aristocratic privilege meant little.

Christensen cites that Byron’s aristocratic attitude persisted throughout his career and was the driver of his success.²⁷ I would argue that this is only partially true. I shall show that *English Bards* represents Byron accepting the influences of middle-class tastes upon his works and a recalibration of the use of his aristocracy away from the foundation of why his work must be respected, to an aspect of fashioning his own image in the public realm. As his letters (and preface) show, Byron was already aware of the combative nature of the new Romantic literary culture inaugurated by the *Edinburgh*. He simply entered the ‘arena’ with the outdated assumption that his status as a young Lord would provide him with cultural authority: an authority that would lead to a positive reception by reviewers and audience alike. Byron’s developing self-image, dented by *The Edinburgh*’s review, demanded retribution. *English Bards* was thus driven largely by Byron’s need to employ and enforce his aristocratic title.²⁸ When *The Edin-*

²⁷ Christensen paints an image of Byron as, at this stage, uneasy with his new title and feeling the need to assert his newly established Lordship upon acceding to the title in 1798. Citing Thomas Moore, Christensen explains how, at first, the title ill suited the poet as ‘the child little knew what a total and talismanic change had been wrought in all his future relations with society, by the simple addition of that word before his name.’ Therefore, when Byron entered the literary world with *Hours Of Idleness*, his preface identified him as a young man uneasy with his title as ‘Lord Byron Minor’, a point that Brougham used to rebut Byron’s poetry. For Christensen, this lordly attitude toward authorship and publication would endure throughout his literary career and led to his success. See Christensen, pp. 22, xvi–xvii.

²⁸ This is coupled with other aspects of his life such as his upbringing in Scotland, his lameness, the desire to assert his newfound aristocracy, and a desire for vengeance. His concern at how people perceived him was thus likely psychologically deep rooted. For discussion of how these aspects led Byron into scrapes during his younger years at Harrow, see Leslie Marchand, *Byron: A Biography*, 3 Vols., (London; Murray, 1957), vol. 1, pp. 65–100.

burgh Review, written by middle-class professionals, dared to challenge the residual authority of a 'lord', Byron, for his own assurance as 'Lord Byron,' needed to respond, albeit by adopting their successful tactics.

English Bards And Scotch Reviewers As Response

The above discussion of power is an important one in understanding the shift Byron's career took when encountered with Brougham's hostility. In the Romantic period, no longer was aristocracy a right to be exercised ensuring a sympathetic reception from any class. Rather, the capitalist and class system emerging in the period democratised literary production, meaning the 'exercising of power' provided greater cultural authority over the vestiges of aristocratic power.²⁹ From Brougham, Byron had learned this lesson. *English Bards* stands as an active attempt to seize back authority by employing the terms Brougham used in tandem with Byron's own perception of himself as the responsive, masculine aristocrat. The poem was his attempt to seize authority over the perversions Byron saw as evident in *The Edinburgh's* review and in Romantic literary culture as whole. It is important to explore the aspects of that culture that Byron took issue with early in his career in order to understand his later frustrations in the period surrounding 1816.

However, Brougham's review had also enlightened Byron to another unique facet of Romantic literary culture, one that would inform his career from then onwards: the value of writing as, what Stewart labels, an 'exhibition'.³⁰ In his study of Robert Southey's reviews in *The Quarterly*, Stewart aptly highlights that:

All periodicals, it might be claimed, are travelling by "the same road": they are all performing for the same public. The arguments between them may be the product of ideological difference, but they might equally be considered an entertainment for an audience that they share.³¹

²⁹ Whilst it is fair to say this, aristocracy undoubtedly still held an allure to aspiring middle-class readers.

³⁰ David Stewart, 'The Examiner, Robert Southey's Print Celebrity and the Marketing of *The Quarterly Review*' in *Prose Studies*, Vol. 31, Issue 1, (2009), pp. 22–39 (p. 28).

³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 24.

That is to say that rivals *The Quarterly* and *The Edinburgh* engaged in vitriolic literary debates largely for the spectacle that it allowed their audiences to enjoy. The duel was the point. Stewart claims that:

Southey proposes making both Jeffrey and himself an exhibition to be enjoyed by a shared reading public, an exhibition brought into being by his vituperative language. Southey goes beyond merely correcting the errors of Jeffrey: rather, he revels in a style that becomes entertaining as an end in itself.³²

The same could be aptly said of Byron's *English Bards*. Byron had not only learned from *The Edinburgh* that in order to compete over his self-representation in the public eye he must exercise power, but also that the vigorous exercising of power was often part of the spectacle for an audience whose opinions he must now consider. Byron had learned the style of the 'slashing review'.

To do this, Christensen identifies that Byron commandeers the legalistic language of *The Edinburgh* in order to judge the judges. Attacking Francis Jeffrey (believing him to be his tormentor in *The Edinburgh*), Byron declares:

Health to immortal Jeffrey! once, in name,
England could boast a judge almost the same;
In soul so like, so merciful, yet just,
Some think that Satan has resigned his trust,
And given the Spirit to the world again,
To sentence Letters, as he sentenced men.
With hand less mighty, but with heart as black,
With voice as willing to decree the rack;
Bred in the Courts betimes, though all that law
As yet hath taught him is to find a flaw.³³

Citing his job as a court judge through the commandeering of *The Edinburgh's* legalistic language, Byron mocks Jeffrey's assumption of the role in the literary sphere too, declaring his 'decree[s of] the rack' to writers as too cruel, even torturous.

³² Ibid., p. 28.

³³ Byron, *English Bards And Scotch Reviewers* in *Lord Byron: The Complete Poetical Works*, vol. 1, ll. 438–447.

Turning legal language against those who pervert ‘proper’ judgement of poetry was not the only thing Byron utilised to attack *The Edinburgh* though. Indeed, their anonymity (used to maintain an air of ideological neutrality and professionalism) is attacked in the poem too. Despite the review’s anonymity Byron still accuses Jeffrey of not being neutral or judging his poetry on its merits alone. Therefore, Byron compares himself to those anonymous critics in his reply: ‘My voice was heard again, though not so loud, / My page, though nameless, never disavow’d; / And now at once I tear the veil away’.³⁴ The lines stand as a theatrical challenge for *The Edinburgh* to tear the veil away and let the critic stand by his words, letting Jeffrey’s and Byron’s audience enjoy the spectacle of the challenge, and encouraging a response (which may entail further spectacle between the parties). For Byron, then, a name to accompany such judgement might provide legitimacy in that their author displays pride in them. In his response to *The Edinburgh*, Byron is thus attempting to turn their strengths in the battle over cultural authority into weaknesses. The reviewers’ anonymity is thus turned on its head and presented as a reluctance to stand by their words, whilst the invocation of law is turned against the judges by identifying their legalistic criticism of effusive poetry as often pedantic and lacking poetical feeling.

However, *The Edinburgh* was not Byron’s only target. As I have outlined, the emergence of the mass marketplace created a relationship between money and literature unseen before, creating such institutions as *The Edinburgh* or publishing houses which flooded the market in response to audience demand. Byron, with his lordly self-perception still intact despite the lesson his review taught him, took particular issue with this mercantile view of literature and judgment. Writing on the best-selling poet of the day, Walter Scott, Byron advises him to ‘think’st thou, Scott! by vain conceit perchance, / On public taste to foist thy stale romance, / Though Murray with his Miller may combine / To yield thy muse just half-a-crown per line?’³⁵ It is important to note that Byron does not take issue with the audience in this line, but only with Scott for ‘foist[ing] thy stale romance’ upon that audience at the behest of his publisher Murray in exchange for ‘just half-a-crown per line’.³⁶ The implication is that Scott, at the urging of Murray, is

³⁴ Ibid., ll. 1041–1043.

³⁵ Ibid. ll. 171–174.

³⁶ It is interesting to note that Murray would become Byron’s long time publisher after *English Bards And Scott Reviewers* and Byron’s attitudes to commerce would change alongside this. Evidently Murray did not make too much of the slight either.

producing poor poetry for economic exchange. But what has allowed the audience to have bad poetry ‘foisted’ upon them?

Byron elaborates by suggesting the targets of his poem are too numerous: ‘Nor know we when to spare, or where to strike, / Our bards and censors are so much alike’.³⁷ The relationship between publishers, reviewers and poets is apparently far too close. Murray was the owner of the Tory *Quarterly Review*, the *Edinburgh’s* ideological rival, as well as Scott’s occasional publisher.³⁸ In a timely coincidence, Byron’s poem appeared in March 1809, the same month as *The Quarterly’s* first issue. Byron would have been aware that *The Edinburgh* was owned by Archibald Constable, the publisher of Scott’s *Lay Of The Last Minstrel* (1805) and *Marmion* (1808), the very poems Byron was attacking.³⁹ The close relationship between poets and the publishers of often rival reviews, the apparent organs whose cultural authority guides audience favour, is here criticised by Byron. Rather than guiding the public towards good poetry then, for ‘half-a-crown per line’ bad poetry is foisted upon that audience by both complicit authors, canny publishers, and paid-for reviewers. Whilst the reviewers’ exhibition of a back-and-forth may be entertaining for his audience (and something Byron is emulating in his poem), it evidently comes at the cost of poetic standards. Byron therefore finds problematic repetitive literature which receives no real or rigorous critique, or, more aptly, the emerging capitalist market for literature in which components interact to exploit audience for profit to the neglect of true poetic standards.⁴⁰

³⁷ Byron, *English Bards*, ll. 91–92.

³⁸ As I have pointed out in my introduction, *The Quarterly* was founded in 1809 by Murray in response to *The Edinburgh*, with contributors such as Scott (who had wrote for *The Edinburgh*), in order to provide a Tory alternative to the largely Whig journal. The fact that an organ owned by the publisher of Scott, who worked for that organ too, could review Scott’s works suggests Byron’s point is valid. For an example of how Byron may have been complicit in this culture by critiquing Murray in *English Bards* in an attempt to position himself as a Murray author, see Caroline Franklin, *Byron: A Literary Life*, (London; Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), pp. 42–7; for the claim that *The Edinburgh* sold 13,000 copies at their height, with *The Quarterly Review* claiming to sell slightly more, see Butler, ‘Culture’s Medium: The Role Of The Review’, pp. 127–152; and for authoritative sales figures and a background for *The Quarterly Review*, see ‘*The Quarterly Review Archive*’ in *Romantic Circles* <<https://www.rc.umd.edu/reference/qv/index.html>> [accessed 17/04/19].

³⁹ Scott’s poems were published in Edinburgh by Archibald Constable the owner of *The Edinburgh Review*, with John Murray (the owner of *The Quarterly Review*) acting as the London agents and publishing Scott there for his English audience. With a foot in both journalistic camps, Scott occupied an almost unique position in coming under very little attack by either review.

⁴⁰ It is important to bear these frustrations in mind as they will become important later in his career, as I shall demonstrate in my discussion of Byron’s *Eastern Tales*.

The disdain Byron showed for such a world is evident in a letter to his half-sister, Augusta, just after *English Bards*' publication: '[there is] Nothing so fretful, so despicable as a Scribbler, see what *I* am, & what language I have been obliged to treat them with to deal with them in their own way; all this comes of Authorship, but now I am in for it, & shall be at war with Grubstreet, till I find some better amusement'.⁴¹ The comments pick up that Byron, in order to wage war against the reviewers who attacked him, had to utilise their language and styles, fighting under their terms. In doing so, Byron became embroiled in the culture he sought to criticise ('see what *I* am'). Whilst his desire to assert the lordly image of himself over the image that *The Edinburgh* promoted of him drove his reply in *English Bards*, he had learned from Brougham's review two lessons: that the residual power of aristocracy could no longer assure him a positive reception and that he had to consider audience spectacle in the construction of his poetry. In this emerging marketplace, it was only by exercising power in the public sphere through response and publication that Byron could compete for cultural authority and guide the public's perception of him. The best way to do that was by engaging in the spectacle of 'slashing criticism'.

Byron and Pope: Eras in Satire

Similar concerns over the location of cultural authority (or to whom audiences should listen) had raged, to a lesser extent, in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries too, with Byron actively adopting the position and emulating the style of his hero Pope. Indeed, Pope (like Byron at various stages in his career) existed 'in the centre and on the margins of a historical moment he both celebrated and deplored'.⁴² Pope's seemingly adversarial relationship to an apparently perverted literary culture was one that Byron attempted to mirror in *English Bards* albeit tailored to a new context in which the stakes were higher due to the vastly enlarged and increasingly complex Romantic audience. That audience was now dominated by a middle class which was, according to Ben Wilson, becoming increasingly religious, censorious, and anxious about moral decay that, they feared, was leading to the decline of Britain.⁴³

⁴¹ Byron, 'To Augusta Leigh, 2 September 1811' in *Byron's Letters and Journals*, vol. 2, p. 88

⁴² Peter Stalleybrass and Allon White, *The Politics and Poetics of Transgression*, (Ithaca, NY; Cornell University Press, 1986), p. 117.

⁴³ See Ben Wilson, *Decency and Disorder: The Age of Cant 1789-1837*, (London; Faber & Faber, 2007).

Byron inherited a world sculpted by the concerns surrounding commerce in literature Pope held, with the literary culture of the early nineteenth century having its foundations in Pope's era. In the Romantic period, the eighteenth-century upper and middle class's desires 'for an ever-increasing variety of objects' had spread into the literary world via dropping prices in the print industry, and the discerning and selective *Edinburgh* was the natural result of earlier journals and their increasing struggle to keep up with an expanded text industry, as well as an enlarging and complex audience's desires for guidance in an expanded market.⁴⁴ Pope was ultimately 'at the dawn of a literary career in which he endeavoured to define the modern author as both producer and proprietor of his text', something Byron sought in *Hours Of Idleness* albeit realised that, due to the new Romantic conditions of literary culture, he could not wholly be after Brougham's intervention.⁴⁵

In *The Dunciad* (1728–43), it is the relationship between money and literature that bears the brunt of Pope's ire when he writes against the rise of 'Grub Street' or the culture of hackneyed writing, poor criticism, and literature for profit:

Hence Miscellanies spring, the weekly boast
 Of Curll's chaste press, and Lintot's rubric post:
 Hence hymning Tyburn's elegiac lines,
 Hence *Journals, Medleys, Merc'ries, Magazines*:
 Sepulchral lies, our holy walls to grace,
 And new-year odes, and all the Grub Street race.
 In clouded majesty here Dulness shone;⁴⁶

For Pope, 'Grub Street', lauded as a 'holy' 'Supulch[re]', has produced nothing but that which 'Dulness', his fictional goddess who seeks to turn all the world to stupidity, would approve of.

Expressing similar sentiments, in *English Bards* Byron rails that 'These are the themes, that claim our plaudits now; / These are the bards to whom the Muse must bow: / While MILTON, DRYDEN, POPE, alike forgot, / Resign their hallow'd Bays to

⁴⁴ Helen Deutsch, *Resemblance and Disgrace: Alexander Pope and the Deformation of Culture*, (Cambridge MA; Harvard University Press, 1996), p. 3.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Alexander Pope, *The Dunciad* in *Alexander Pope: The Major Works*, ed. Pat Rogers, (Oxford; Oxford University Press, 2006), Book 1, ll. 39–45.

WALTER SCOTT.⁴⁷ He directly links the decline in poetic standards, exemplified by Scott's 'repetitive', 'poor' poetry, to desire for money in the lines:

No! when the sons of song descend to trade,
Their bays are sear, their former laurels fade,
Let such forego the poet's sacred name,
Who rack their brains for lucre, not for fame:
Still for stern Mammon may they toil in vain!
And sadly gaze on Gold they cannot gain!
Such be their meed, such still the just reward
Of prostituted Muse and hireling bard!⁴⁸

Both poets thus display a concern that poetry was on the decline in their respective periods due to the emerging role of capitalism in literature. However, Byron is keenly aware of the new moralistic tendencies of the Romantic audience he is producing for. Pope's poem displays the poor scene of literature in his period in scatological terms in Book II, when the publishers Curll and Chapman are depicted deciding their competition explicitly in a literal 'pissing contest'.⁴⁹ Byron's poem is not as explicit. Instead, Byron compares poets to 'prostitutes', leaving the word to suggest that their 'Muse' or beliefs are sacrificed to the altar of 'Mammon', thus foisting insincere poetry upon a Romantic audience. Byron accuses Jeffrey (whom he erroneously attributed the review to *Hours Of Idleness* to) of similar sentiments in equally careful but suggestive terms when he states:

To JEFFREY go, be silent and discreet,
His pay is just ten sterling pounds per sheet:
Fear not to lie, 'twill pass for wit;
Care not for feeling—pass your proper jest,
And stand a Critic hated, yet caress'd.⁵⁰

As before with his criticism of the close relationship between poets and reviewers, Byron directly links Jeffrey to the accusation that he 'caress[es]' his contributors for 'ten sterling pounds a sheet' to pen negative, often deceptive (which 'pass for wit') reviews,

⁴⁷ Byron, *English Bards*, ll. 185–188.

⁴⁸ Ibid., ll. 175–182.

⁴⁹ See Pope, *The Dunciad*, Book 2, ll. 167–184.

⁵⁰ Byron, *English Bards*, ll. 69–74.

thus perverting his audience's tastes. The sensuous suggestions of 'caress' though, again implies a prostituting of sincerity from poets in order to please Jeffrey. Byron thus emulates Pope's sentiments on the role of money in literature and criticism, though censors himself due to his awareness of his new, differently composed, moralistic audience.⁵¹ In doing so, both poets are thus attempting to dictate the terms of their own reception by intervening against their literary cultures and judges to correct respective eras that have accepted money as a vital engine to literary production and criticism, sacrificing standards of taste which were previously deemed to be immutable. Byron, though, having learned to incorporate audience consideration from Brougham, accepts both Pope and a newly complex audience into the composition of his works.

This unease with a capitalist literary culture also arises from the same aristocratic attitudes that inspired *Hours Of Idleness*. Whereas in previous centuries poetry was often composed as an aristocratic pastime or via patronage, the new literary culture of the Romantic period constituted a far more transactional and mutually reliant relationship between authors, audience, and arbiters of taste such as reviewers.⁵² Byron had tried to maintain the ancient stance of aristocratic detachment from commerce in literature in his first poetic outing; with *English Bards*, Byron realised that in order to critique a culture that had attacked him, he needed to work within its confines and engage the newly enlarged and complex Romantic audience as a partner in his criticisms, or, as *The Edinburgh* taught him, to 'exercise' power. This tension between the traditional aristocratic view of being above commerce, whilst simultaneously interacting and benefiting from it was one that existed throughout Byron's career and, as we shall see, in his self-fashioning to both friends and his audience. Such criticism, though, stands as yet another attempt by Byron, tweaking Pope's stance, to dictate the terms of his reception by attacking the medium through which poems are selected and reach their audience: criticism in journals.

Whilst the contexts of Pope and Byron are different due to the social changes brought on by the Romantic age, similar anxieties regarding cultural authority and money in literature, permeate both Byron and Pope's poetry and they grappled with this

⁵¹ For Byron showing such an awareness later in his career by discussing Smollett and Fielding, see Lord Byron, *Don Juan* in *Lord Byron: The Complete Poetical Works*, vol. 5, Canto IV, ll. 777–784.

⁵² I have outlined the era as one of transition in my introduction whereby, as Dustin Griffin shows, it was comprised of "'overlapping economies" of patronage and marketplace'. See Griffin, p. 10.

in similar ways: by attacking the sources in order to claim cultural authority for themselves and thus change the terms of reception on which their works would be judged. Byron's attack was thus influenced by Pope's mode, but then also shaped by the newly composed Romantic audience and their increasing moralism. Byron's desire for vengeance upon *The Edinburgh*, his desire to 'correct' literary culture, and his emulation of his hero Pope, is all thus curbed by Byron's newfound consideration for the early nineteenth century's enlarged, multi-dimensional audience.

The 'Narcissism Of Minor Differences'

In another emulation of Pope within his new context, Byron also deploys satire to challenge his contemporary literary culture, a form that is (as Brougham taught Byron the necessity of) reliant on audience engagement. 'Satire' states M. H. Abrams, is 'the literary art of diminishing or derogating its subject by making it ridiculous and of provoking towards it attitudes of amusement, contempt, scorn or indignation.'⁵³ While it may contain comic elements, satire differs from comedy because it 'uses laughter as a weapon, and against a butt that exists outside the work itself'.⁵⁴ Frederic Bogel states that the reader's position, in turn, is expected to be 'unproblematically aligned' with the satirist's, and the reader to share in the justified condemnation of the satiric object that this identification with the satirist entails.⁵⁵ That is to say that both Pope and Byron respectively must be seen as having a 'just' cause to ridicule the object of their satire which exists outside of their poetry, in which the audience is assumed to both see the poets' reason for attack and agree with it. Thus, in utilising Pope's techniques, Byron sought to change the literary culture of his day, but was wholly reliant upon an audience (which was increasingly morally anxious) sympathetic to his cause of correcting the turn of his contemporaries away from classical standards of taste. Unlike in *Hours Of Idleness*, in order for his poetry to function, Byron had taken a mass audience (that he wished to persuade) into account in his composition.

Whilst Byron thus learned from Brougham that an audience must be engaged as an active creative influence (or collaborator in satire) in Romantic poetry, the problem Byron faced is that in *English Bards* the poet is engaging *The Edinburgh* (the external

⁵³ Meyer H. Abrams, *A Glossary of Literary Terms*, 7th Edition, (Boston, MA; Heinle & Heinle, 1999), p. 275.

⁵⁴ Frederic V. Bogel, *The Difference Satire Makes: Rhetoric and Reading from Johnson to Byron*, (New York, NY; Cornell University Press, 2001), p. 1.

⁵⁵ See *Ibid.*, p. 3.

object of his satire) in its own style. In the poem, Byron, effectively, is not highlighting major differences between himself and the targets of his attacks (chiefly *The Edinburgh*), but manufacturing them. Bogel argues that ‘Satirists identify in the world something or someone that is both unattractive and curiously or dangerously like them or like the culture or subculture that they identify with or speak for, or sympathetic even as it is repellent—something, then, that is not alien enough.’⁵⁶ This can often lead to mimetic violence as in Byron’s poem. Freud, in his observation on the differences between neighbouring nations that feuded, labelled this ‘the narcissism of minor differences’.⁵⁷

Much like this, Byron knows the method of *The Edinburgh* and yet utilises identical tactics in *English Bards* against them. In this there is a ‘narcissism of minor differences’. Writing to John Becher in 1808 regarding *The Edinburgh*’s review, Byron states that ‘the System of the Edinburgh Gentleman is universal attack, they praise none, and neither the public or the author expects praise from them’.⁵⁸ Yet, adopting the technique of *The Edinburgh*’s ‘slashing review’, lines 236–254 of *English Bards* read as a universal attack upon all of Byron’s contemporaries including Wordsworth, Coleridge and Bowles. Directly attacking *The Edinburgh* too, Byron singles out Jeffrey and mocks the farcical duel between him and Thomas Moore in 1806 with the lines 460–497.⁵⁹ Furthermore, identically to *The Edinburgh*’s reviews, Byron published *English Bards* anonymously. Whilst he professed to ‘tear the veil away’ from *The Edinburgh*’s critics, as anonymity apparently suggested critics could not stand by their words, Byron utilised anonymity for the same purpose as the magazine: to present himself as a disinterested,

⁵⁶ Ibid., p. 41.

⁵⁷ Freud describes his theory as such: ‘It is clearly not easy for men to give up the satisfaction of this inclination to aggression. They do not feel comfortable without it. The advantage which a comparatively small cultural group offers of allowing this instinct an outlet in the form of hostility against intruders is not to be despised. It is always possible to bind together a considerable number of people in love, so long as there are other people left over to receive the manifestations of their aggressiveness. I once discussed the phenomena that it is precisely communities with adjoining territories, unrelated to each other in other ways as well, who are engaged in constant feuds and in ridiculing each other—like the Spaniards and Portuguese, the North Germans and South Germans, the English and Scotch, and so on. I gave this phenomenon the name of ‘the narcissism of minor differences,’ and which does not do much to explain it. We can now see that it is a convenient and relatively harmless satisfaction of the inclination to aggression, by means of which cohesion between the members of the community is made easier.’ See Sigmund Freud, *Civilisation and Its Discontents*, trans. James Strachey, (New York; Norton, 1962), p. 61.

⁵⁸ Byron, ‘To The Rev. John Becher, 26 February 1808’ in *Byron’s Letters and Journals*, vol. 1, p. 157.

⁵⁹ It was well known that Jeffrey and Moore challenged one another to a duel in which neither party was hurt. However, the controversy surrounding the duel was that Jeffrey’s pistol was found to have contained neither bullet nor shot. For Byron mocking this in his poem, see Byron, *English Bards*, ll. 460–467.

impartial judge, passing justified comment on perceived defects (thus fulfilling satire's requirement that he be understandable and justified in his audience's eyes). That was despite his problems with anonymity in criticism. In order for his satire to work, Byron must present himself as having valid reason to raise his 'grey goose quill' which had once been 'laid aside' and he presents this as the reign of 'Knaves and Fools' prevailing 'o'er all' and weighing 'their Justice in a Golden Scale'.⁶⁰ That is to say, Byron takes up his pen in order to combat the unjust way poetry is judged by those unqualified to do so or corrupted by money.

By explaining why he had taken up the pen against *The Edinburgh*, Byron is successfully presenting himself as having just cause in being made to ridicule the object of his satire. He is thus fulfilling one of the requirements of satire to function by confidently assuming audience support in his rebuttal. However, as I have demonstrated, he does so by adopting the same tactics as the journal (by utilising legalese and by universally attacking contemporaries) meaning that his poem is forced to manufacture difference between himself and *The Edinburgh*. Byron thus not only develops a Popean tactic in his riposte in order to critique a new literary culture governed by commerce and a textured audience, but actively utilises facets of that culture within his composition of *English Bards*. Whilst Byron seemingly attempts to reject *The Edinburgh Review*'s techniques and claims to represent a new literary culture, *English Bards* actually represents an embrace of those, whereby Byron has realised that his old method of composition in *Hours Of Idleness* (demonstrated by Brougham) was no longer applicable to a new cultural context. As Pope states in *The Dunciad*, 'dunce the second reigns like dunce the first'.⁶¹ Reigning like the first dunce, *English Bards*, in other words, represents the first poem of Byron's interactive career in which the implications of an audience plays an active role in the sculpting of the text. The review of *Hours Of Idleness* though, and Byron's response with *English Bards*, demonstrates that Byron was learning to be reactive and responsive to a literary culture which such lessons would lead him to dominate.

Conclusion

⁶⁰ Due to the new moralistic audience that Ben Wilson identifies as emerging in the Romantic period, aware of his cultural surroundings, Byron knew he could not be as bawdy as his hero Pope. Therefore, whilst he attempts to emulate Pope, he does so by adopting the appropriate standards of the age, which *The Edinburgh* already operates within. See Ben Wilson; and Byron, *English Bards*, ll. 7, 31–32.

⁶¹ Pope, *The Dunciad*, Book 1, l. 6.

It is clear then that Brougham's review of *English Bards And Scotch Reviewers* taught Byron that he could not afford to rely upon the old notions of aristocratic privilege for cultural authority in the evolving literary landscape of the Romantic period. Instead, he was forced to acknowledge the emerging power and discernment of an increasingly moralistic middle-class audience that he must engage with in order for his work to be successful. Brougham demonstrated to the young lord that that audience must play a creative and acknowledged role in the creation of Byron's texts and, that despite his critiques of commerce in literature, Byron must engage with a capitalistic marketplace sculpted partially by the exercising of the power of *The Edinburgh* and others. Due to *Hours Of Idleness*'s failure, Byron learned to operate within this new context. *English Bards* represents Byron's emulation of old Popean tactics utilised within a revolutionary Romantic context, whilst creating a new format of poetic composition: it is the first poem in which Byron actively incorporated an awareness of a Romantic audience (as well as direct representatives of that audience like *The Edinburgh*) as a creative consideration in his works, a trend that extended all the way through his career.

Not only did *The Edinburgh Review*'s reception and response to Byron encourage him to write a reply, adopting their tactics in its creative process, but also for Byron to experiment with identity in a far more fluid way than his first literary foray, *Hours Of Idleness*, throughout his career (as I shall demonstrate). *English Bards* can thus be seen as Byron's first attempt to wrest back representations of himself in the public sphere by painting an image of himself as a masculine and responsive poet (encouraged by *The Edinburgh*'s lesson) who satirised the perversions of a literary culture tainted by money and commerce. As we shall see, this is a self-image Byron enjoyed promoting, but one that he did not necessarily adhere to, or have complete control over. Indeed, in the next chapter, we shall see how his attraction to such an image was sacrificed for success, which would eventually lead to Byron's disillusionment with his relationship to audience and the implications of his fame around 1816.

As Peter Graham states, due to its favour amongst Tories for attacking Whigs, 'English Bards had the presumably uncalculated effect of perfectly paving the way for a partnership between the poet Byron and the publisher John Murray. This long standing relationship was to be the most significant single determinant of Byron's publishing life' and would lead him to acclaim through the networking of a responsive poet, astute

publisher, and rapt readers.⁶² Byron and Murray's relationship would not always be harmonious, but it was enormously productive and integral to Byron's rise. Without Murray, as we shall see, Byron would likely have not become, according to Mole, one of the phenomenon of celebrity's 'earliest examples and most astute critics'.⁶³ This network of author, non-authorial agents, and acknowledgement of audiences that I have outlined in my introduction, would come together, driven by the occasionally competing intentions of each, to push Byron's career in serpentine directions. With his reply to *The Edinburgh*, Byron had founded a dynamic that would go on to define his career: consideration, negotiation, and engagement with audiences, textual marketplaces, and literary culture. This would manifest in both experimentation and play in Byron's later works.

⁶² Graham, p. 30.

⁶³ See Mole, p. xi.

Chapter Two: Byron's Loss Of Control - *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* (1812–1818) and The Eastern Tales

"I awoke one morning and found myself famous."¹ Byron supposedly uttered this famous phrase after the publication of *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage Cantos I and II*. It suggests that his fame was spontaneous and unexpected. In truth, Byron, at his publisher John Murray's guidance, had been positioning himself for *Childe Harold* to be an unprecedented success. It was the extent of their success and the magnitude of Byron's fame that surprised the poet and publisher and which eventually led to the cultural phenomena we call 'modern celebrity' and 'Byromania'. Tom Mole claims that 'modern celebrity culture began in the Romantic period and ... Lord Byron should be understood as one of its earliest examples and most astute critics'.² Ghislaine MacDayter similarly identifies 'Byromania' as an 'extraliterary event' in that, unlike any other writer before him, it was not just Byron's texts that were desired but the writer himself or, rather, contact with his person.³ With the publication of *Childe Harold* and his subsequent Eastern Tales, Byron became the best-selling poet of the era, outpacing the previous best-seller Scott.⁴ But such success would not have been possible without the astute interventions of Murray, coupled with Byron's willingness to make compromises to his editor and readers. In other words, I want to argue, *Childe Harold* was not simply authored by Byron, but was the creative product of a mesh of intersecting interests and the implications of his fame.

In his analysis of Murray and Byron's relationship, Christensen identifies the publisher as a restrictive influence upon Byron's works, cornering the poet into writing repetitive poetry in order to appease a market hungry for tales of the orient.⁵ Likewise, Mole identifies Murray as a 'possessive' or restrictive influence, restraining the poet to the hugely popular model of Eastern Tales.⁶ However, I believe that this characterisa-

¹ Quoted in Thomas Moore, *The Life of Lord Byron with His Letters and Journals*, 6 Vols., (London; John Murray, 1851), vol. 2, p. 159.

² Mole, p. xi.

³ Ghislaine McDayter, *Byromania and the Birth of Celebrity Culture*, (New York; State University Of New York Press, 2009), p. 4.

⁴ For a comparison of the sales figures and print runs of Byron and Scott, see St Clair, pp. 327, 573.

⁵ Christensen, pp. 120–122.

⁶ Mole, pp. 108–110.

tion is too harsh and largely based on Byron's friends' negative opinions of the publisher, misinterpreted comments in Byron's letters of bantering affection over Murray's role, or as part of Byron's own myth making. In this characterisation and in my analysis of the pair's correspondence, I align with Mary O'Connell's in-depth analysis of Byron and Murray's relationship.⁷ This chapter shall marry her analysis of the pair's relationship to the influence of Byron's varied audiences, showing how his texts were thus 'polyvocal' and the result of brokerage between the parties. I shall contend that Byron and Murray developed an intricate relationship whereby Murray encouraged Byron's creativity but adapted his work accordingly towards the market his business was built upon, as is the job of a publisher in any period.⁸ Agreeing with O'Connell, I shall show that Murray understood Byron's desires, self-perception, and drives, and carefully utilised them to guide the poet and his creations toward their contemporary audience's desires. With occasional complaints, Byron at first knew such compromise was worth it both financially and in terms of his own literary reputation and self-perception. As Peter Graham notes, Byron 'seems to have needed Murray more than Murray needed him'.⁹ Disagreements naturally occurred, but rather than a fraught relationship of 'containment', Murray and Byron shared a positive relationship of creative negotiation that delivered a tailored product which produced Byron's celebrity.

As with any contact with a mass-anonymous public though, Byron and Murray could not completely control perceptions or interpretations of either Byron's works or the celebrity image they had constructed, despite their attempts. Drawing on the pair's correspondence, contemporary reviews, archival research, and building upon the im-

⁷ O'Connell's analysis highlights that we must view publishers as a crucial component in the shaping of texts. She argues that this is due to their desire to maximise sales and thus tailor the work to audience desire. I agree with this. Accordingly, her analysis will be referred to frequently throughout this chapter. However, I am going further in suggesting that audience directly influenced Byron too, as I shall demonstrate by introducing a discussion of fan mail and fan responses. I contend that Byron did not purely adjudge his works by Murray's advice on audience, but received feedback directly from them and from his relationship with them. He then calibrated his works accordingly, taking into account Murray's views on audience as well as the actual views of his audience (regardless of what Murray said about them). This process of multiple inputs create the 'polyvocal text'. See Mary O'Connell, *Byron and John Murray: A Poet and His Publisher*, (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2014), p. 7.

⁸ In a letter, Murray compares Byron to Dryden briefly, and thus characterises himself, 'I suppose, to be treated like [Jacob] Tonson', one of the most influential and successful booksellers of the eighteenth century, including of Pope. See John Murray, '6 August 1814' in *The Letters of John Murray to Lord Byron*, ed. Andrew Nicholson, (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2007), p. 104.

⁹ Graham, p. 35.

portant work by Mole, McDayter, James Soderholm, and especially Corin Throsby's recent analyses of Byron's anonymous fan mail, I shall explore how Byron and Murray cultivated a relationship founded upon intimacy with Byron's audience, but how such intimacy encouraged interpretation and an exploration of desires by various audiences that the pair had not envisaged.¹⁰ Mole's 'hermeneutic of intimacy' suggests that Byron's success centred on his and Murray's manipulation of a mass audience by constructing a sense of intimacy between the reader and poet founded upon Byron's 'celebrity' and the public's desire to know the details of his life.¹¹ He contends that Byron deliberately constructed his poems to function, or be fully understood, only by his audience relating the works to his life. Accordingly, reading his works with knowledge or hearsay of Byron's life was like 'entering a kind of relationship with the author and that that relationship resembled an intimate connection between individuals.'¹² However, I shall build upon this by suggesting that when these audiences interpreted Byron's works and his identity in ways he could not exercise control over, Byron became frustrated with his position. I shall argue that images of entrapment in Byron's *Eastern Tales*, which Christensen identifies as representative of Murray's restrictive influence on the poet, are actually due to Byron's exasperation about this lack of control over the public's perception of him. This was due to his realisation that he was, in pandering to such audiences with such tales, becoming what he had attempted to tear down in *English Bards*.

Furthermore, I shall propose that the reception of the poet's marriage breakdown in 1816 exemplifies this lack of control. Once Byron's texts were handed over to the public, they were invited to interpret the poet in their own ways. The breakdown of Byron's marriage, then, coupled to his subversive texts, led large swathes of his British audience to damn him as immoral, forcing him into European exile. I shall propose that this led Murray and Byron to an embryonic and brief attempt at what would be referred

¹⁰ Mole refers to this form of literary intimacy between Byron and his audience as the 'hermeneutic of intimacy'. I shall employ this idea, although I shall demonstrate that, contrary to Mole's view, such a technique did not allow Byron and Murray to, in any way, control the public's perceptions of the poet. See Mole, pp. 1–27; James Soderholm, 'Byronic Confession' in *Byromania: Portraits of the Artist in Nineteenth- and Twentieth-Century Culture*, ed. Frances Wilson, (London; MacMillan Press, 1999), pp. 184–194; and Soderholm, *Fantasy, Forgery and the Byron Legend*, (Lexington, KY; University Of Kentucky Press, 1996); and Corin Throsby, 'Flirting with Fame: Byron's Anonymous Female Fans' in *The Byron Journal*, Vol. 32, Issue 2, (2004), pp. 115–123.

¹¹ As Mole points out, this is much like modern 'celebrity'. Mole, p. xi.

¹² Mole, p. 216.

to nowadays as a ‘public relations campaign’ in *Childe Harold’s Pilgrimage*, *Canto III* and the later released *Canto IV*.

I shall approach Byron’s texts, then, as a negotiation between (or ‘polyvocal texts’ with input from) three creative influences: Murray, Byron, and the poet’s consideration of audiences. However, I shall suggest that the bonds between the parties became increasingly unstable as Byron’s texts and celebrity were released to a powerful and varied audience. The pair became increasingly aware, and evidently frustrated, that audiences they had shaped became a creative force that acted upon Byron’s texts and image, actively determining their meanings. As we shall see, this instability increasingly prompted resistance from Byron, which in turn frustrated Murray, and would eventually lead to the playful experimentation of *Beppo* and *Don Juan*, as well as the break-up of the pair’s publishing relationship in 1823. With a multitude of varying voices to examine, then, this chapter shall examine a breadth of different responses to Byron from both audiences and Murray in order to demonstrate how Byron’s texts negotiated the implications of his fame, the mercantile interventions of the Romantic literary industry, and a new culture of Romantic readership.

Marketing Byron

Only two months into their partnership in September 1817, Byron, referring to the recent suicide of another publisher in a letter to Charles Dallas, wished that Murray had been ‘tied to Payne’s neck when he jumped into the Paddington canal *that* is the proper receptacle for publishers’.¹³ He also asked Thomas Moore to ‘nail Murray ... to his own counter’.¹⁴ So early in their relationship, it seems the pair would be incompatible as a publishing machine. Nevertheless, Byron and Murray were, and would become a literary juggernaut with their first joint venture, *Childe Harold’s Pilgrimage*, *Cantos I & II* going on to sell around 13,750 copies in the Romantic period alone.¹⁵ This figure would later be dwarfed when Murray claimed that ‘I sold, on the Day of Publication, a thing perfectly unprecedented, 10,000 Copies [of *The Corsair*]’ (St Clair estimates that *The Corsair* sold around 25,000 copies in the period, making it one of the era’s best-

¹³ Byron, ‘To Robert Charles Dallas, 17 September 1811’ in *Byron’s Letters and Journals*, vol. 2, p. 101.

¹⁴ Byron, ‘To Thomas Moore, 19 September 1821’ in *Ibid.*, vol. 8, p. 215.

¹⁵ For Byron’s print runs, see St Clair, pp. 585–590.

selling texts).¹⁶ It is easy to see why such wishes of violence have led scholars to conclude Byron and Murray had a rough relationship. However, even by examining their collaboration on the first two cantos of *Childe Harold*, we can see that they actually had a thoroughly productive relationship in which Murray's sense of Romantic audiences formed the foundations of Byron's fame and literary success. Without Murray, Byron may never have achieved the contemporary fame he did. This is due in large part to Murray's vision of Byron and his texts as not merely a literary phenomenon but also a very public, cultural one too, whereby Byron himself was in as much demand as his texts: or, as McDayter puts it, Byron as 'extraliterary event', with Murray's interventions in *Childe Harold* being the spark.

Current scholarship seems to suggest that Murray was an odd choice for Byron. Indeed, Caroline Franklin identifies their relationship as 'the greatest paradox of Byron's literary life'.¹⁷ However, she also suggests that Byron had, whether deliberately or inadvertently, positioned himself to become a Murray author with *English Bards* by attacking *The Edinburgh* and endorsing of the neoclassical standards of William Gifford: Byron was targeting the same marks as Murray's new *Quarterly Review*.¹⁸ Such accounts may likely rely too heavily on interpretations of Byron and Murray's respective politics as, by looking back at their collaboration, it could be said to have been one of the most successful in literary history.¹⁹

How Byron came to be a Murray author is shrouded in some mystery in large part due to Byron's friend Robert Charles Dallas' embellishing of his own role.²⁰ Dallas though did introduce the relationship, offering *Childe Harold, I and II* to various publishers before Murray finally agreed to publish it, at the demand of Byron to not show the manuscript to his literary advisor William Gifford.²¹ However, upon receipt of Byron's poem, Murray did turn to Gifford for advice on its editorship. Writing to Dallas

¹⁶ Murray, '2 February 1814' in *The Letters Of John Murray To Lord Byron*, p. 72.

¹⁷ Franklin, *Byron: A Literary Life*, p. 42.

¹⁸ However, this could be disputed by the fact that Byron unsuccessfully attempted to have *Childe Harold* printed by others before turning to Murray. *Ibid.*, pp. 42–47.

¹⁹ Murray putting aside his politics in *The Quarterly* with an eye to sales is evidenced by his attempt to hire the radical Leigh Hunt; for more on this see Johnathan Cutmore (ed.), *Conservatism and The Quarterly Review: A Critical Analysis*, (London; Pickering And Chatto, 2008), p. 10; and Mary O'Connell, '[T]he Natural Antipathy of Author and Bookseller': Byron and John Murray', in *The Byron Journal*, Vol. 41, Issue 2, (2013), pp. 159–172 (p. 163).

²⁰ For Byron's negotiations, conducted by Dallas, with Murray and other publishers initially, see Marchand, *Byron: A Biography*, vol. 1 pp. 278–326.

²¹ In his letter to Murray, Byron urged the publisher not to show the manuscript to Gifford: 'My friend Mr. Dallas has placed in your hands in manuscript: written by me in Greece, which he tells me you do not object to publishing.—But he also informed me in London that you wish to

about Murray's betrayal, Byron railed: 'I will be angry with Murray, it was a bookselling, back shop, Paternoster Row, paltry proceeding,' labelling him 'the betrayer of trust.'²² Dallas responded by reminding Byron of Murray's role:

[Y]ou are a great deal too much alive on the subject of the Poem having been seen by Gifford... You do not yet know the practice of booksellers who never enter up on printing speculations without consulting an Oracle—and that Murray's should be a Delphic oracle should rather be a cause of pride than of mortification to an author in whose favour it decides. You have no right to be angry with Murray—So far from going to solicit praise, he, as all others do, was only solicitous as to the probability of his expenses being equalled by the produce of the sale—Had Gifford shrugged his shoulders instead of reading many of your stanzas a second time in animated tones, he would perhaps have decided on the octavo size & inferior paper that is all.²³

Murray's move indeed paid dividends, with Byron (heeding Dallas' advice) coming to accept guidance that he would call 'absurd half and half prudery' when offered by Murray, becoming acceptable when it came from Byron's new 'Grand Patron' Gifford.²⁴ Indeed, as Graham points out, 'Byron continued to admire Gifford and respect his advice largely thanks to the tact of Murray, who transmitted (and filtered) both Gifford's opinions and Byron's reactions. In doing so, Murray sometimes served as a lightning rod for Byron's authorial outrage' with *Childe Harold*, *The Bride Of Abydos* (1813), *Manfred* (1817) and *Beppo* all coming under Gifford's inspection.²⁵

Murray accordingly requested changes to the original manuscript before publication. Writing to the poet, Murray declared it 'therefore grievous indeed, if you do not condescend to bestow upon it, all the improvement of which your Lordships mind is still capable', advising him to soften the stances towards Spain and Portugal (with the ongoing Peninsular war likely in mind) and tone down the 'religious feelings' as they

send the M.S. to Mr. Gifford—now, though no one would feel more gratified by the chance of obtaining his observations on a work done myself there is in such a proceeding, a kind of petition for praise, that neither my pride or—whatever you please do call it—will admit.' See Byron, 'To John Murray, 23 August 1811' in *Byron's Letters and Journals*, vol. 2, p. 78.

²² Byron, 'To Robert Charles Dallas, 23 September 1811' in *Ibid.*, p. 105.

²³ Quoted in O'Connell, *A Poet and His Publisher*, p. 76.

²⁴ Quoted in Graham, p. 32.

²⁵ *Ibid.*

did ‘not harmonise with the general feeling’ and would consequently ‘greatly interfere with [the poem’s] popularity’. O’Connell points out that, in a phrase Murray would regularly use towards Byron, he was told such changes should be made with an eye to ‘customers amongst the Orthodox’.²⁶ Byron complied. At both Murray’s and Dallas’s requests the titular character’s name was changed from ‘Lord Buron’ (to distance the relationship between the poet and his character), ‘To Inez’ and Harold’s song ‘Good Night’ were added, certain stanzas (which Byron asked the pair to ‘point out the stanzas... which you wish recast’) were altered, stanzas attacking the Duke Of Wellington and Lord Elgin were omitted, Byron’s views on the Convention Of Cintra and on the after-life were revised, and lines calling William Beckford ‘smitten with unhallowed thirst / Of nameless crime’ were deleted.²⁷

Alan Rawes identifies how, at this stage, Byron’s poem was an experiment in many different styles and stances and that it was such alterations that resulted in the poem’s signature melancholy.²⁸ Before Murray’s suggestions, *Childe Harold* stood as a far more satirical poem with digressions akin to his later works like *Beppo*.²⁹ The poem thus stands as an example of Byron’s attraction to the comic impulse, a thread that continues from *English Bards*.³⁰ This was curbed in this instance by Murray’s eye to the ‘Orthodox’. Rawes demonstrates examples of Byron’s experimentation by identifying that Canto I, Stanzas 19–27 all contain various modes of poetry.³¹ Stanza 19 reads as a description of the landscape by listing the topographical features of Portugal; Stanza 21 offers up Byron’s travel advice to his readers, functioning as a tour narrative; Stanza 25 stands as an example of Byron’s curbed satire (‘Convention is the dwarfish demon styl’d / That foil’d the knights in Marialva’s dome: / Of brains (if brains they had) he them beguil’d, / And turn’d a nation’s shallow joy to gloom.’); and, finally, Stanza 27 representing a return to the narrator telling of Harold’s narrative.³² The poem itself was,

²⁶ O’Connell, *A Poet and His Publisher*, p. 11; and Murray, ‘4 September 1811’ in *The Letters Of John Murray To Lord Byron*, p. 3.

²⁷ Mole also lists the changes Byron made to *Childe Harold* at the request of his publisher and friends, although he posits that this was to hide Byron’s homosexual dedication and relationship with his old school friend, John Edleston, in the poem. See Mole, p. 50-51; and O’Connell, *A Poet and His Publisher*, p. 79.

²⁸ See Alan Rawes, *Byron’s Poetic Experimentation: Childe Harold, the Tales, and the Quest for Comedy*, (Aldershot; Ashgate, 2000), pp. 1–14.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 7–8.

³⁰ Such a comic impulse emerged again later when Byron was testing the limits of his altered relationship to audience with *Beppo* and *Don Juan*.

³¹ Rawes, p. 9.

³² Francis Jeffrey equally struggled to discern the character of Byron’s poem, stating ‘[t]he most surprising thing about the present work, indeed, is, that it should please and interest so much as

even before Murray's intervention, one of alienation and desolation that various critics have ascribed to different reasons. Mole ascribes 'To Ianthe' to Byron's personal loss of a coterie of intimate friends from Cambridge, whilst Paul Elledge identifies the poem's melancholy to Byron's concerns about losing an audience due to his attack upon Romantic literary culture in *English Bards*.³³ Despite such experimentation and potential motives, by removing the satire and sharpening the poem, McGann argues that Byron (or, rather, Murray) made 'the personal losses assume [a] kind of climatic significance'.³⁴ As we shall see, such calibration of the poem towards melancholy was part of Murray's marketing vision for both Byron and his texts.

In his negotiations with Byron over *Childe Harold*, Murray would pioneer the way in which he could persuade Byron into his alterations: by appealing to Byron's curiosity with a fame that extends beyond the Romantic period. As O'Connell demonstrates, at first Murray unsuccessfully attempted flattery.³⁵ However, one compliment in his request for changes evidently worked as Murray employs it throughout his negotiations with Byron:

[I]t were cruel indeed not to perfect a work which contains so much that is excellent—your Fame my Lord demands it—you are raising a Monument that will outlive your present feelings, and it should therefore be so constructed as to excite no other associations than those of respect and admiration for your Lordship's Character and Genius'.³⁶

it does, with so few of the ordinary ingredients of interest or poetic delight' and that the moods of the poem and characters 'run directly counter to very many of our national passions, and most favoured propensities'. See Francis Jeffrey, 'Review Of Childe Harold's Pilgrimage. A Romaunt' in *The Edinburgh Review*, (February 1812 [published May]), pp. 466–8, cited in Donald H. Reiman (ed.), *The Romantics Reviewed: Contemporary Reviews of British Romantic Writers*, 4 Vols., (New York, NY; Garland, 1972), Part B, vol. 2, pp. 836–7; and See Lord Byron, *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage: A Romaunt* in *Lord Byron: The Complete Poetical Works*, vol. 2, Canto I, ll. 243–251, 261–269, 297–305, 315–323.

³³ See Mole, pp. 47–59; and Paul Elledge, 'Chasms in Connections: Byron Ending (in) *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* 1 and 2', in *ELH*, Vol. 62, Number 1, (Spring 1995), pp. 121–148.

³⁴ Jerome McGann, *Fiery Dust: Byron's Poetic Development*, (Chicago, IL; University Of Chicago Press, 1968), p. 109.

³⁵ O'Connell highlights that when Murray attempted to flatter Byron, he was met with little success with the poet telling him that 'time seems to be past when (as Dr Johnson said) a man was certain to "hear the truth from his bookseller", for you have paid me so many compliments, that, if I was not the veriest scribbler on Earth, I should feel affronted'. He continued that he should, instead of 'accept[ing Murray's] compliments', 'give equal or greater credit to your objections'. For O'Connell's discussion of this incident, see O'Connell, *A Poet and His Publisher*, p. 14.

³⁶ Murray, '4 September 1811' in *The Letters Of John Murray To Lord Byron*, p. 3.

Indeed, Byron's later embarrassment over the writing of his *Eastern Tales* displays his desires to be remembered literarily beyond his death when he writes to Moore claiming they were 'humiliating' as they displayed his 'want of judgment in publishing, and the public's in reading things, which cannot have stamina for permanent attention'.³⁷ By appealing to Byron's curiosity and self-perception, Murray had thus created a method for handling perhaps his most volatile and demanding writer.³⁸

By examining Murray's interventions in *Childe Harold*, it is evident that Byron and Murray approached the poem with different intentions. Byron wrote the poem with melancholic notes to his lost friends, alongside the satiric barbs typical of *English Bards* and his later satires. Murray saw the potential for more, due in large part to his role as a publisher as an arbiter of the public's taste. The resulting edition of *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* in 1812 can thus be seen as a product of Murray's negotiation, by appealing to Byron's desires and self-perception about literary posterity, as well as Byron's willingness to make compromises to Murray. Byron thus sacrificed his satire in *Childe Harold* in the pursuit of fame: a fame, he felt, Murray's interventions could help achieve. As we shall see, Murray's intercessions at this point fed into his larger marketing vision for Byron, his texts, and for a relationship that could actively evolve to the celebrity culture that they both developed and initially thrived under.

A central way that Murray's alterations of *Childe Harold* fitted into his larger vision for Byron was through what Nicholas Mason identifies as the emergence of 'branding' in the period. Mason identifies in the poem 'the instance when branding extended from the industrial to the cultural sector of the British economy'.³⁹ The advances of the early nineteenth century led to an increase in the advertisement of products. Government records demonstrate that in 1713, 18,220 advertisements were taxed. However, by 1800, over 500,000 adverts were taxed annually in Britain.⁴⁰ This was due to 'branding', whereby producers sought to convince 'the consumer that a certain product was worth asking for by name.'⁴¹ Examples of this included Day And Martin's shoe polish,

³⁷ Byron, 'To Thomas Moore, 3 March 1814' in *Byron's Letters and Journals*, vol. 4, p. 77.

³⁸ O'Connell cites Murray's Obituary in *The Illustrated London News* to illuminate just how volatile an author Byron was: 'Murray remembered Byron visiting his shop in Fleet Street and practising fencing technique by aiming at the bookshelves, unsurprisingly adding "I was sometimes... glad to get rid of him!"' See O'Connell, *A Poet and His Publisher*, p. 12.

³⁹ Nicholas Mason, 'Building Brand Byron: Early-Nineteenth-Century Advertising and the Marketing of *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*' in *MLQ: Modern Language Quarterly*, Vol. 63, Number 4, (December 2002), pp. 411–440 (p. 415).

⁴⁰ See *Ibid.*, p. 416.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 419.

which Byron was presumed to have endorsed.⁴² Brand building and aggressive marketing had become commonplace, resulting in professionals in ‘respectable’ fields feeling free to aggressively vend their products. This led to the British public ‘becoming inured to advertising, accepting it as a vital source of information’.⁴³ Scholarship has often turned away from the material facts of bookselling in favour of his myth of ‘waking up famous’. But, as Mason states, the literary text does not ‘transcend the mundane processes that mark the exchange of other commodities’.⁴⁴ In reality *Childe Harold* could not have sold out of copies in three days on its own merits or by word of mouth. The truth was that Byron and Murray had been aggressively marketing *Childe Harold* before its release to ensure the poem’s popularity and to put the first building block into, as Mason puts it, ‘brand Byron’: a unique and instantly recognisable cipher which audiences were supposed to follow and purchase.⁴⁵

Whilst *English Bards* had painted Byron with notoriety with many influential figures, Mason suggests that it was also ‘the preparatory text that shows the flaws in all existing poetic products.’⁴⁶ Aware of this damage, Murray encouraged reconciliation between Byron and a number of his targets such as Scott and the Whig Parliamentary leader, Lord Holland. Indeed he sent Holland an advanced copy of *Childe Harold* on Byron’s behalf, and put Byron and Scott in contact. On the thawing in relations, Scott recorded that Byron’s ‘reconciliation with Holland-House is extremely edifying, and may teach young authors to be in no hurry to exercise their satirical vein’.⁴⁷

Apart from reconciliation and clearing space for himself in the literary marketplace, Byron, with Murray’s collusion, also consciously made himself visible in Regency society. Mole has detailed how taking up his position in the House of Lords and making his maiden speech on the frame breaking bill in early 1812 helped foster his

⁴² For Byron’s supposed endorsement of shoe polish (and his repudiation), see John Strachan, *Advertising and Satirical Culture in the Romantic Period*, (Cambridge; Cambridge University Press, 2011), p. 39.

⁴³ Mason, ‘Building Brand Byron’, pp. 423–424.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 424.

⁴⁵ As Mason argues, the pair fortuitously arrived at the perfect moment to expand branding practices into the literary market. See *Ibid.*, p. 423.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 428–429.

⁴⁷ Sir Walter Scott, ‘To Lady Alvanley, 28 May 1812’ in *The Letters of Sir Walter Scott*, 12 Vols., ed. Herbert John Clifford Grierson, (London; Constable And Co., 1932), vol. 2, p. 124; and see O’Connell for Lord Holland stating to Thomas Moore that ‘It was *not* from his birth that Lord Byron had taken the station he held in society, for till his talents became known, he was, in spite of his birth, in any thing but good society, and but for his talents would never, perhaps, have been in any better’. See O’Connell, *A Poet and His Publisher*, p. 81.

emergent celebrity.⁴⁸ As Byron boasted to Charles Dallas, the speech had ‘given the best advertisement for *Childe Harold’s Pilgrimage*.’⁴⁹ He was proved correct: Mason shows us that between the 27th of February and the poem’s publication on 10th of March, his name appeared in every major London newspaper with *The Morning Chronicle* declaring ‘Lord BYRON, who spoke on the Nottingham Felony Bill on Tuesday, evinced considerable eloquence.—his talents have been already established by his literary productions, but it does not always happen that able writers are gifted with the powers of elocution’, ensuring that Byron was the talk of London’s drawing rooms.⁵⁰

Byron’s awkwardness in Regency society is well known, but it, alongside other publicised eccentricities of the poet, were part of his and Murray’s marketing of Byron and his poem. Byron’s appearances in public led to speculation about his character, with Samuel Rogers questioning his performance when he noted that Byron ate ‘nothing but hard biscuits and soda water’. Later he asked John Hobhouse ‘how long will Lord Byron persevere in his present diet?’ Hobhouse replied ‘Just as long as you continue to notice it’.⁵¹ Such publicised eccentricities and feats as Byron swimming the Hellespont, boxing with the well-known pugilist ‘Gentleman Jackson’, and drinking wine from a human skull at home in Newstead Abbey, all added to the masculine, alluring public image that Byron sought to craft for himself.⁵² Indeed, Byron’s future wife, Annabella Milbanke, upon witnessing Byron for the first time, recorded that:

His mouth continually betrays the acrimony of his spirit. I should judge him sincere and independent—sincere at least in society as far as he can be, whilst dissimulating the violence of his scorn. He very often hides his mouth with his hand while speaking. [...] It appeared to me that he tried to control his natural

⁴⁸ For Byron’s appearances in Regency Society, see Marchand, *Byron: A Biography*, vol. 1, pp. 327–379; and Mole, pp. 28–44.

⁴⁹ Quoted in Mason, ‘Building Brand Byron’, p. 431.

⁵⁰ For the effects of ‘An Ode To The Framers Of The Frame Bill’, see Mole, pp. 28–44; Mason quotes *The Morning Chronicle* and newspaper statistics to demonstrate the effects of the ‘Ode’, see Mason, ‘Building Brand Byron’, p. 431.

⁵¹ Quoted in Samuel Rogers, *His Very Self and Voice: Collected Conversations of Lord Byron*, ed. Ernest J. Lovell Jr., (New York; Macmillan, 1954), p. 41.

⁵² St Clair estimates that around twenty percent of the sales of *The Giaour* and around thirty-six percent of the sales of *The Corsair* were to families with an income of over £200 per year, an income strata that would, according to him, put them into the rank of ‘gentility’. This would be a strata that may have witnessed the man in person, or, at least, be able to relate to the aristocratic world Byron circulated within. See William St Clair: ‘The Impact Of Byron’s Writings: An Evaluative Approach’ in *Byron: Augustan and Romantic*, ed. Andrew Rutherford, (London; Palgrave Macmillan, 1990), p. 6.

sarcasm and vehemence as much as he could, in order not to offend; but at times his lips thickened with disdain, and his eyes rolled impatiently. Indeed the scene was calculated to shew human absurdities.⁵³

Byron's presentation in public then was very much 'calculated', and theatrical with such 'thickened' 'lips' and 'rolled' 'eyes'. Indeed, O'Connell cites Moore in that Byron's 'double aspect' or 'the spell of his poetical character' was one way that Byron encouraged his audience to imagine the 'fierce gloom and sternest of his imaginary personages' belonged as much to himself as, for example, the Childe who 'felt the fullness of satiety: / Then loath'd he in his native land to dwell'.⁵⁴ Rather than presenting himself as another earnest, Cambridge-educated poet, it seems that Byron was consciously adopting the pose of an eccentric to fuel gossip. Murray, as Mole has shown, aided in sculpting such a public image too, in the engravings he chose to accompany *Childe Harold*.⁵⁵ The images of Byron's fictional character bore a striking resemblance to the poet himself, and Murray's shop assistants referred to the poem as 'Childe Of Harrow's Pilgrimage', for which the publisher was scolded by his poet.⁵⁶

But theatrical public appearances and engravings were not the only marketing strategy Murray utilised. Murray, as Mason has shown, drew on the cultivated gossip about Byron when placing advertisements for the poem in newspapers like *The Times*, with the name 'Lord Byron' especially prominent, despite this going against the poet's wishes for anonymity due to fear that his prior attacks in *English Bards* would lead to a poor reception for the poem.⁵⁷ For the publisher, the advantages outweighed the risks. In an era in which most aristocrats thought little of writing poetry, the interest that would be generated around Byron's name and the publicity he had already garnered would counterbalance the risks of vengeful reviews. Byron eventually relented with the

⁵³ Marchand, *Byron: A Biography*, vol. 1, p. 333.

⁵⁴ See O'Connell, *A Poet and His Publisher*, p. 89; and Byron, *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*, Canto I, ll. 34–35.

⁵⁵ For discussion of Murray's use of Byron's image in prints throughout his career, see Mole, pp. 78–98.

⁵⁶ Quoted in O'Connell, p. 91.

⁵⁷ Mason, showing how Murray maximised Byron's exposure and thus saved costs on print advertising, cites that the publisher did not rely on direct advertising like flyers, newspaper and magazine adverts. However, some did appear in London newspapers between the 5th and the 10th of March, 1812. But 'Murray's account books show that the advertising expenditures for the first edition came to only £19 13s. 6d. To put this figure into perspective, in 1813 and Richard Duppa reported to Parliament that "every new book consisting of one or two 8vo. volumes is calculated to cost £30 to advertise".' See Mason, *Building Brand Byron*, p. 426, 434–435.

proviso that whilst his name would appear on the piece, it must be accompanied by a preface disavowing any link between himself and his character. In his advertisement, Murray also frames the poem not as politically driven but as travel narrative, a style popular in the period and now apt due to Murray's alterations.⁵⁸

Due to negotiation and compromise between the pair, the marketing performed before *Childe Harold's* release ensured that the edition sold out within three days of its publication. Both Byron and Murray consciously collated their collected knowledge of the literary marketplace in order to ensure a positive reception for the poem utilising the tactics available to them both. Whilst both parties may have held different ideas about the poem, their collaboration shows that each used their prior knowledge of audience desires and their own ambitions to shape the poem. In this way, Byron's audience also worked as an active collaborator in the poem's composition. Murray and Byron thus had a vision of Byron's public image in their heads that strongly correlated, coinciding in *Childe Harold's* marketing. As we shall see, this combination would be hugely effective. Once in the public realm, though, identity, in the bustle of celebrity, becomes difficult to control.

Byronic Intentions

Murray and Byron's marketing of 'Byron' fed into a larger pattern that sculpted the ways in which Byron and his works were received, whether intentional or not. *Childe Harold* introduced a pioneering style of reading which encouraged readers to seek insights into Byron's personal life and use these insights as evidence that Byron and his characters were one and the same. Such a tactic is astutely labelled by Mole as the 'hermeneutic of intimacy'. This 'worked by suggesting that [Byron's] poems could only be understood fully by referring to their author's personality, but reading them was enter-

⁵⁸ Additionally, Mason shows that common practice amongst publishers marketing their poems before release was to send copies to reviewers before the public. However, Murray tactically selected which journals would receive copies in order to ensure positive reviews to bolster Byron's sales, withholding copies from Tory journals who would likely object to Byron's viewpoints and handing *The Quarterly's* review to George Ellis who positively reviewed it despite it standing contrary to the journal's politics. As Byron was to later comment 'Murray has long prevented "The Quarterly" from abusing me.... Some of its bullies have had their fingers itching to be at me.' See *Ibid.*, p. 435.

ing a kind of relationship with the author and that that relationship resembled an intimate connection between individuals'.⁵⁹ In other words, the discerning reader, it was suggested, could glimpse into Byron's life through his poetry and make assumptions about the texts based on what they already knew of the poet. *Childe Harold* represents the most thinly veiled of all Byron's characters in that respect, although it is still a constructed, artificial intimacy rather than a confession. It is crucial to maintain that these supposed insights into the poet's life were at this point authorised and built by Byron, and thus hint at what the poet wants his audience to presume. In utilising such tactics, Byron and Murray are thus attempting to dictate the terms of Byron's and his texts' reception. A further attraction of the poem to its audience (one that aids in the construction of the hermeneutic) is Byron's revolutionary presentation of a character of turbulent emotion, haunted by an unspeakable past, but who expresses sentiments most of his audience will have felt but have never fully articulated: or, as scholars now term the trope, the 'Byronic hero'. As I have demonstrated though, this trope can be partially attributed to Murray's editing of *Childe Harold* rather than the pure expression of Byron's personality.

Indeed the clearest evidence that *Childe Harold* was a thinly veiled cover for Byron's own experience was the poem's original title: 'Lord Buron'. Another is in the preface, where Byron attempted to distance himself from his character and preempt his audience from connecting Harold to himself. Byron wrote:

That in this fictitious character, 'Childe Harold,' I may incur a suspicion of having intended some real personage: this I beg leave, once for all, to disclaim—
Harold is the child of imagination, for the purpose I have stated.⁶⁰

Whilst he disavowed publicly any connection between himself and his character, in private he betrayed that he had indeed constructed Harold as a mask to his own experience and memories. Writing to Dallas, Byron stated that 'I by no means intend to identify myself with Harold, but to deny all connection with him. If in parts I may be thought to

⁵⁹ Mole, p. 23; Mole also cites Peter Manning that Byron's poems 'furnished the simulacrum of intimacy the new readership craved'. See Peter J. Manning, 'Don Juan And The Revisionary Self' in *Romantic Revisions*, ed. Robert Brinkley and Keith Hanley (Cambridge; Cambridge University Press, 1992), p. 216.

⁶⁰ Byron, 'Preface' To *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage: A Romaunt* in *Byron: The Complete Works*, vol. 2, p. 4.

have drawn from myself, believe me it is but in parts, and I shall not own even to that.’⁶¹

Byron’s intention of drawing from his own experience and hinting that the emotions of Harold were his, indeed enraptured his audience and sources indicate that they made the connection. For example, Walter Scott’s letter to Joanna Baillie dissects it thoroughly:

Have you seen the pilgrimage of *Childe Harold*, by Lord Byron: it is I think a very clever poem but gives no good symptom of the writers heart or morals. His hero notwithstanding the affected antiquity of the stile in some parts is a modern man of fashion and fortune worn out and satiated with the pursuits of dissipation and although there is a caution against it in the preface you cannot for your soul avoid concluding that the author as he gives an account of his own travels is also doing so in his own character.⁶²

Scott objects to the poem’s content, yet understandably sees the connections between Byron and his protagonist.

Not only is Harold depicted as having ‘through Sin’s long labyrinth had run’ and ‘spent his days in riot most uncouth’ (like Byron upon inheriting his estate), but also ‘loathed he in his native land to dwell, / Which seem’d to him more lone than Eremite’s sad cell’.⁶³ The style invites readers to sympathise with the sinful loner, and Byron’s awkward public appearances with Byron-like prints of Harold provided by Murray, coupled with his vaunted tour of Europe, encouraged his audience to make parallels between him and his character. But Byron also depicts an image most of his audience is likely to have felt, or at least to have fancied themselves feeling: love denied leading to misery. Harold had ‘sigh’d to many though he loved but one, / And that loved one, alas! could ne’er be his’. This hints at an almost universal experience that is not unique to Harold.⁶⁴ The poem prompts its readers to relate to the lovelorn Harold, inciting a sympathetic response to Byron himself in the drawing rooms. Byron revisited such sentiments later in a letter to his future wife Annabella Milbanke by writing ‘the great object

⁶¹ Byron, ‘To Charles Dallas, 31 October, 1811’ in *Byron’s Letters and Journals*, vol. 2, p. 122.

⁶² Scott, ‘To Joanna Baillie, 4 April 1812’ in *The Letters of Sir Walter Scott*, vol. 3, pp. 98–99

⁶³ Byron, *Childe Harold’s Pilgrimage*, Canto I, ll. 37, 12, 35–36.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, ll. 39–40.

of life is Sensation—to feel that we exist—even in pain.’⁶⁵ She also recorded privately her attraction to Byron: ‘I was not bound to him by any strong feeling of sympathy till he uttered these words, not to me, but in my hearing—“I have not a friend in the world”’.⁶⁶ Neglecting to mention Dallas, Scrope Davies, or Hobhouse, Byron evidently revelled in playing the part or saw the financial sense of Murray’s suggestions.

Thus *Childe Harold* saw the construction of what Mole terms the ‘hermeneutic of intimacy’ in Byron’s works which allow his audience the position of privileged reader with supposed insights into his life.⁶⁷ Intentionally constructed by Murray’s interventions and Byron’s compromises and theatricality, the mode would go on to dictate how the pair engaged with a mass Romantic audience, harnessing such a reading to encourage Byron’s celebrity. It is the presentation of Harold’s sympathy-inducing emotions seemingly masking the poet’s own which enraptures his audience and gives them an ‘intimacy’ with Byron. This intimacy is artificial, though, as nothing is truly revealed. However, I shall demonstrate how, without genuine revelation, it was impossible for Byron and Murray to wholly control his public image due to public speculation. Such a reading on the part of Byron’s audience thus has its flaws, but these flaws would ultimately work in Byron’s favour when he embraced satire and play in his relationship with his audience in *Beppo* and *Don Juan*. Around the personal crises of 1816, though, what appears to be a powerful position in manipulating audience began to feel like powerlessness when Byron’s public image became the property of public opinion.

Byronic Desires

Byron’s poetry, then, actively encouraged his audience to experience an intimacy with the poet through, according to Mole, ‘billets-doux, coded messages for those readers sympathetic enough to receive them’.⁶⁸ Mole goes on: ‘once Byron was identified as

⁶⁵ Byron, ‘To Annabella Millbanke, 6 September, 1813’ in *Byron’s Letters and Journals*, vol. 3, p. 109.

⁶⁶ Quoted in Leslie Marchand, *Byron: A Portrait*, (Chicago, IL; University Of Chicago Press, 1979), p. 122.

⁶⁷ This is bolstered by Bernard Beatty’s statement that Harold is ‘a fictional character who is allowed his own voice to utter sentiments which belong as much to Byron as they do to his protagonist. In this sense, we could see it as the most integrated of his compositions.’ See Bernard Beatty, ‘*Childe Harold’s Pilgrimage Cantos I and II in 1812*’ in *The Byron Journal*, Vol. 41, Number 2, (2013), pp. 101–114 (p. 112).

⁶⁸ Mole, p. 24.

somehow lurking behind his protagonists, his invitation to gaze at them could be recognised as an invitation to gaze at Byron himself. By the curious transference that made so many of the poems' first readers certain that Byron had drawn himself in his heroes, desire for the answer that their bodies would provide became desire for Byron himself, Byron in the flesh.'⁶⁹ As McDayter and Throsby demonstrate, this is too simplistic a view of Byron's relationship with his audience and it places too much emphasis on a sense of control that Byron and Murray had over audience response.⁷⁰ In actuality, Byron's poetry, once released into the public realm, encouraged Byron's audience (both female and male) to indeed conceive of an intimacy with Byron, but then to use this intimacy to explore very disparate desires about themselves and Byron.

Undeniably some of Byron's readers did indeed desire sexual contact with the poet themselves.⁷¹ Lady Caroline Lamb, who had an actual relationship with Byron, began by imagining him as his characters (which Byron intermittently encouraged and discouraged in letters), and later, McDayter suggests, wrote *Glenarvon* (1816) as an attempt to relive through fantasy the relationship she once had.⁷² Likewise, Harriette Wilson claimed that she 'took [*Don Juan*] to bed' with her, and that it kept her up all night suggesting that she slept with the poem like a lover.⁷³

However, not all women responded to Byron's texts in such a way, and the texts, whilst encouraging erotic fantasy (as Mole and Charles Donelan have argued), were open enough to allow other desires to flourish.⁷⁴ McDayter, for instance, argues

⁶⁹ Mole, p. 72.

⁷⁰ McDayter suggests that Byron's works operate by revealing 'what is so fascinating about the hidden passion of any character is not discovering the truth about it, but rather the mystery's ability to provoke our imaginative projection of that truth. We draw upon our own experiences and emotional reality to help us solve the mysterious behaviour of another.' See McDayter, p. 13; and Throsby posits that, rather than sexual desire for Byron, his female readers expressed 'feelings of alienation from the world, identification with Byron, and a desire to make some kind of contact with the poet.' See Throsby, p. 115.

⁷¹ Commenting on Byron's 'under look' for instance, Lady Mildmay's heart apparently 'beat so violently that she could hardly answer him' upon encountering him, and, the Scottish novelist, Susan Ferrier decreed 'the new Canto of Childe Harold' as 'enough to make a woman fly into the arms of a tiger'. Quoted in Marchand, *Byron: A Biography*, vol. 1, p. 330; and quoted in St Clair, *Reading Nation*, p. 398.

⁷² The relationship between Lamb and Byron, especially in Lamb's fiction and poetry, is considerably more complex than this, though a full explanation of it is beyond my scope. For my purposes here I wish simply to note the ways in which Byron, through Lamb, witnessed his own creation of 'Byron' taking on a life that was beyond his control. For more on the way Lamb responded to Byron, see Soderholm, *Fantasy, Forgery and the Byron Legend*, pp. 10, 61–67; and MacDayter, *Byromania*, p. 162.

⁷³ Quoted in Throsby, p. 118.

⁷⁴ See Charles Donelan, *Romanticism and Male Fantasy in Byron's Don Juan*, (Basingstoke; Macmillan, 2000); Mole, pp. 60–78.

that women were interested not so much in an actual sexual encounter with Byron, but in the fantasy of having a relationship with the poet, and that the poet and his texts acted ‘as a space or setting for their fantasies’.⁷⁵ Byron’s poetry thus acts as a conduit for the exploration of his audience’s personal desires. McDayter points out that lines 64–72 of Canto I of *Childe Harold*, for instance, display Harold’s character (and thus Byron’s) desires as unknowable and varied, even to himself, suggesting desire to be open to interpretation:

Yet oft-times in his maddest mirthful mood,
 Strange pangs would flash along Childe Harold’s brow,
 As if the memory of some deadly feud
 Or disappointed passion lurked below:
 But this none knew, nor haply cared to know;
 For his was not that open, artless soul
 That feels relief by bidding sorrow flow;
 Nor sought he friend to counsel or condole,
 Whate’er this grief mote be, which he could not control.⁷⁶

Harold’s ‘Strange pangs’ suggest that ‘disappointed passion lurk[s]’ in his heart, yet ‘none knew’, including Harold himself, ‘Whate’er this grief mote be’. Desire for intimacy with Byron not as a sexual partner is evident in Throsby’s pioneering exploration of Byron’s anonymous fan-mail. In her reading of a letter addressed to Byron by ‘Echo’, Throsby highlights that Byron is positioned ‘like a damsel in distress’ when ‘Echo’ asks ‘Should curiosity prompt you, and should you not be afraid of gratifying it, by trusting yourself alone in the Green Park at seven O’clock this evening, you will see Echo ... Be on that side of the Green Park that has the gate opening onto Piccadilly [sic], and leave the rest to Echo’.⁷⁷ In the fanciful scenario of Byron meeting her in the park, ‘Echo’ is positioned as the one in power, fantasizing that her anonymity (and thus intrigue) affords her power over Byron, and hence an allure for the poet (much like his poems offer readers through mystery).

Additionally, Byron’s heroes encourage readers to believe that they (and thus

⁷⁵ Quoted in Throsby, p. 119.

⁷⁶ McDayter, p. 13; and Byron, *Childe Harold’s Pilgrimage*, Canto I, ll. 64–72.

⁷⁷ Throsby, p. 121.

Byron) are haunted by an unspeakable past.⁷⁸ Commenting on Byron and his reputation whilst passing by him in a carriage, with those unspeakable crimes in mind, Lady Liddell would warn her daughter: ‘Don’t look at him, he is dangerous to look at’.⁷⁹ Another way Byron’s readers engaged with him was to view themselves as a potential rescuer of Byron, curing his melancholy and aiding repentance. Other letters analysed by Throsby demonstrate this with statements such as ‘I am anxious that it should return to its natural bias before it is too late, that while you have time you should repent’ and ‘the interest I feel—the eager wish for power to contribute (tho’ but a mite) to your happiness—arises from sympathy adding strength to compassion’.⁸⁰ Indeed, Byron’s eventual wife, Annabella Milbanke, representing such a reading before their marriage, warned other women against the perils of falling for Byron’s character Harold due to his inconstancy and flattery in her responsive essay ‘The Byromania’ in 1812.⁸¹

Byron’s readings thus allowed his female readers to position themselves in various fantasy relationships to Byron based on their different drives and desires. But such responses to the poet cross gender divisions. A large section of Byron’s readers (both male and female) seemingly felt a kinship with the poet due to their own experiences. One member of Newcastle-Upon-Tyne’s Literary And Philosophical Society, Joseph Macleod, in his essay entitled ‘A Discourse On The Comparative Merits Of Scott And Byron As Writers Of Poetry’ (1817) compared the two by arguing that ‘the ardent’ love Byron’s work ‘since the human heart has been his subject—man his theme—passion his delight—and storms and tempests his rejoicing’.⁸² Byron’s poetry then, offers glimpses into ‘the human heart’ as well as apparently ‘manly’ experience and feeling.⁸³ Macleod evidently empathises with the feelings Byron communicates.

⁷⁸ This unspeakable past is evident, for instance, in the lines in *Childe Harold*: ‘For he through Sin’s long labyrinth had run / Nor made atonement when he did amiss, / Had sighed to many, though he loved but one, / And that loved one, alas, could ne’er be his’. See Byron, *Childe Harold’s Pilgrimage*, Canto I, ll. 37–40.

⁷⁹ Quoted in Marchand, *Byron: A Biography*, vol. 2, p. 692.

⁸⁰ Throsby, p. 119.

⁸¹ Soderholm has an in-depth discussion of the ways Milbanke responded to Byron, including an exploration of her essay ‘The Byromania’ (1812). Much like his discussion of Teresa Guiccioli, Milbanke thought Byron someone who could be saved. For a discussion of Lady Byron, see Soderholm, *Fantasy, Forgery and the Byron Legend*, pp. 70–101; and for Guiccioli and her attempts to reform Byron’s texts after his death, see pp. 102–132.

⁸² Joseph A. Macleod, ‘A Discourse On The Comparative Merits Of Scott And Byron As Writers Of Poetry, Extended And Printed In 1824’ in *Reports, Papers, Catalogues, &c. of the Literary and Philosophical Society of Newcastle Upon Tyne*, ed. Anthony Hedley, 11 Vols., (Newcastle; T & J Hodgson, 1831), vol. 7, pp. 46–49.

⁸³ Charles Kingsley, in *Fraser’s Magazine* in 1848, comparing Byron to Percy Shelley, wrote of the ‘worthy peer’, Byron, that he was ‘proud of his bull neck and his boxing, who kept bears

Like Macleod, another anonymous female writes that ‘Like [Byron] ... I am indeed the child of sorrow and misfortune, estranged from my former friends, and abandoned by my family for having from conviction embraced the Roman Catholic faith’.⁸⁴ Clearly, across gender lines, Byron’s heroes (and his audiences’ interpretation of him as his heroes) allow those who had experienced alienation to empathise with the poet’s condition and explore their own emotions. That they now had an apparently intimate and like-minded acquaintance to do that with was evidently appreciated.

Thus, whilst Byron’s poetry deliberately constructs an intimacy with an audience intended to encourage sexual desire for Byron (as Mole suggests), once it was released to the public, interpretation of his open but intimate poems allowed (more than Mole, and others, have acknowledged) various audiences to explore disparate desires and form their own perceptions of Byron. Such interpretations were an implication of Byron’s writing style and fame the poet and Murray had not envisaged. Knowledge of Byron’s life was, for swathes of his audience, evidently not what answered the obscured histories of Byron’s characters. Often their own desires and experiences formed the basis of their reception of Byron’s poetry. Byron and Murray thus constructed *Childe Harold*, and most of Byron’s poetry, in a way that intended intimacy and erotic attraction to Byron based on their own imagined ideas of audience, thus attempting to dictate a real audience’s interpretation of Byron and his works. Instead, as the pair became increasingly aware of, the audience they had helped build became an inventive force that creatively interpreted Byron’s texts, actively shaping their public meanings. Such an interaction was one that Byron and Murray could not ignore. It began to affect in increasingly prominent ways the shapes that Byron’s poems took, and, indeed, the shape that the celebrity image ‘Byron’ took. It was an interaction that increasingly prompted resistance from Byron, and, accordingly, the instability of the bonds between the three creative elements (poet, publisher and audience) became more and more apparent. The diversity of

and bull-dogs, drilled Greek ruffians at Missolonghi’, and that he ‘had no objection to a pot of beer.’ Byron was apparently ‘a man’, whilst ‘Shelley’s nature is utterly womanish’. Quoted in Susan Wolfson, *Borderlines: The Shiftings of Gender in British Romanticism*, (Stanford CA; Stanford University Press, 2006), p. 188.

⁸⁴ Displaying identical drives, another anonymous female correspondent who identifies as ‘Rosalie’, tells Byron ‘[...] she has not the presumption [...] to attract the notice of Ld Byron, although her rank in life, and fortune, would entitle her to move in the same circle. She has been bred in “disappointment’s school,” and secluded from a world that youthful wishes led her to believe contained many charms [...]. Yet to Ld Byron she must ever remain conceal’d’. See Throsby, p. 120.

audience interpretation was an implication of Byron's fame that both the poet and Murray had not foreseen but that they had to respond to in their upcoming texts.

Frustrations And Crises

Referring to his recent 1814 publication, Byron told Thomas Medwin that he wrote 'to captivate all the ladies' and, in this, he 'was more pleased with the fame [*The Corsair*] had, than with that of any other of my books. Why? For the very reason because it did shine, and in boudoirs. Who does not write to please the women?'⁸⁵ *The Corsair*, as with all of Byron's similar 'Eastern Tales' was indeed popular amongst women, but he would come to regret such bravado due to the influence of those very 'ladies'.⁸⁶ Writing to Murray later about his female readers, Byron complained 'I have been their martyr.—My whole life has been sacrificed to them and by them' and that he had been 'ravished' by women.⁸⁷ As I have shown, women interpreted Byron in ways that were beyond his control and tastes. Frances Wilson states that, with the Eastern Tales, 'Byron now belonged to his readers, as if by being read the writer were literally purchased. The "Byronic" became public property and Byron found that his identity was no longer synonymous with his image, that there was a severance between the self he experienced himself as being and the self returned to him in the eyes of his audience.'⁸⁸ The fan mail Byron received, unfiltered by Murray's opinions of audience, proved to the poet what little control he had over the ways his audiences interpreted him once his works were the property of such varied readers. It is thus little wonder that Byron felt so 'ravished'.

By 1814, and on the back of *Childe Harold*'s success, Byron had published both *The Giaour* (1813) and *The Bride Of Abydos* (1813), and was writing *Lara* (1814), all of which utilised the style that had ensured his fame in the early cantos of *Childe Harold*. Evincing this, in a letter to Moore, Byron urged him to 'Stick to the East;—the oracle, Staël, told me it was the only poetical policy. The North, South, and West, have all

⁸⁵ Quoted in Wolfson, *Borderlines*, p. 192.

⁸⁶ Byron boasted to Lady Blessington about the number of letters he had received from female fans, enough apparently 'to fill a large volume'. Quoted in O'Connell, *A Poet and His Publisher*, p. 89.

⁸⁷ His claim of being a martyr to women was in response to *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* accusing Byron of being unduly harsh to his female characters. See Byron, 'To John Murray, 10 October 1819' in *Byron's Letters and Journals*, vol. 6, p. 257; and for Byron discussing being 'ravished' by women, this is quoted in Leslie Marchand, *Byron's Poetry: A Critical Introduction*, (Boston, MA; Houghton Mifflin, 1965), p. 165.

⁸⁸ Frances Wilson, 'Introduction: Byron, Byronism, And Byromaniacs' in Wilson, *Byromania: Portraits of the Artist in Nineteenth- and Twentieth-Century Culture*, p. 6.

been exhausted; but from the East, we have nothing but S**'s [Southey's] unsaleables,—and these he has contrived to spoil, by adopting only their most outrageous fictions ... the public are orientalizing, and pave the path for you'.⁸⁹ At first, Byron evidently revelled in his commercial success, although he apparently came to regret pursuing it. I contend that this is due to Byron's realisation that his public image was becoming too similar to those he had castigated in *English Bards*: the pandering poet, 'foisting' bad poetry onto his audience. Commenting on Murray's financial offer for his poetry, Byron stated that it was 'not a bad price for a fortnight's (a week each) what?—the gods know—it was intended to be called Poetry'.⁹⁰ Evidently he was locked in a cycle of poor but pandering poetry. Frustration with his situation becomes visible in the frequent images of entrapment in his Eastern Tales, and in particular *The Giaour* and *The Corsair*.

'Ever dying—ne'er to die,' *The Corsair*'s Conrad is kept imprisoned by his own circumstances and when offered freedom by Gulnare, turns it down.⁹¹ Christensen points out that this familiar romantic attitude, encapsulated by the Giaour's 'cloistered remorse', repeats Coleridge's *Ancient Mariner* (1798), and anticipates Shelley's *Prometheus Unbound* (1819), in that the poet is imprisoned by his inability to create something new and original.⁹² Much like Conrad, Byron is trapped in a prison brought on by his own actions, doomed to repeat that what pains him (writing repetitive poetry), but 'ne'er to die'.⁹³ Christensen cites William Hazlitt as labelling this pose as the 'literary character' whereby the melancholy author who, having lost the magic of his mind and tortured by one 'unglutt eye' or another, surrenders to the languid pleasure of repeating himself.⁹⁴ Christensen argues that the above passage from *The Corsair* is allegorical, and that it is Pasha Seyd's 'unglutt eye' that keeps Conrad imprisoned, much like it is Murray's that is imposing on his writing. According to him, whereas Conrad stands

⁸⁹ Byron, 'To Thomas Moore, 28 August 1813' in *Byron's Letters and Journals*, vol. 3, p. 101.

⁹⁰ Byron, 'Journal, 17 November 1813' in *Ibid.*, p. 212.

⁹¹ See Lord Byron, *The Corsair* in *Byron: The Complete Works*, Canto II, ll. 283, 435–490.

⁹² See Christensen, p. 120.

⁹³ Similarly, in *The Giaour*, Byron compares his hero's mind to: 'the Scorpion girt by fire; / In circle narrowing as it glows, / The flames around their captive close, / Till inly searched by thousand throes, / And maddening in her ire, / One sad and sole relief she knows—/ The sting she nourished for her foes, / Whose venom never yet was vain, / Gives but one pang, and cures all pain, / And darts into her desperate brain.' Evidently, when imprisoned, the scorpion's only recourse is to sting itself, escaping its pain via suicide. See Lord Byron, *The Giaour* in *Byron: The Complete Works*, ll. 423–432.

⁹⁴ Quoted in Christensen, p. 120; and Byron, *The Corsair*, Canto II, l. 282.

in for Byron's position, Seyd stands in for Murray, the publisher (encouraged by audience reaction), who tortures the writer into continued production.⁹⁵

But this reading too easily neglects Murray's clever awareness of the literary market, his encouragement of Byron to expand his repertoire, and Byron's lack of will to change. Indeed, aware of the fluidity of the market and that frequent publication lowers the demand for Byron's works, Murray frequently encouraged Byron, through anecdotes, hints, or through direct requests. For instance, describing a meeting with Byron's 'patron', Murray suggested that Gifford had requested 'will he not collect all his force <fo> for one immortal work[?]'.⁹⁶ At other points, Murray 'expect[ed] to be favoured with a deep Tragedy' for a change, or a poem on Napoleon's abdication which would make 'A Fine Subject for an Epic', or, indeed, 'a new Baviad which we very much need to flap away a nest of pretenders'.⁹⁷ Evidently, in his encouragement of Byron to return to the Popean manner of *English Bards*, Murray too seems aware that Byron may indeed be becoming like the hackneyed writers he once derided.

Instead, I suggest Byron's images of entrapment are due to his realisation that he was unable to control public perceptions of himself and that that image was becoming ever more like what he had attacked in *English Bards*. Wilson states that Byron 'did not want to be seen as a sedentary poet with writer's block, but rather as a man of action who wrote as fast as he lived and with as much nonchalance'.⁹⁸ Scott observed in his review of *Childe Harold* that Byron 'manages his pen with the careless and negligent ease of the man of quality'.⁹⁹ This undoubtedly fit into Byron's own self-perception, although other reviewers were not so kind. Indeed one of Byron's contemporary critics declared 'Childe! Giaour! and Corsair!—names by which men call / Bad copies of a worse original'.¹⁰⁰ Likewise, when Byron claimed in the preface to *The Corsair* that it would

⁹⁵ Christensen, pp. 120–122.

⁹⁶ Murray, '20 September 1813' in *The Letters Of John Murray To Lord Byron*, p. 42.

⁹⁷ See Murray, '26 September 1815', '9 April 1814', '27 October 1820' in *Ibid.*, pp. 141, 89, 354.

⁹⁸ Frances Wilson, p. 8.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁰ Similarly, *The Eclectic Review* stated in 1816 that 'It is requested that an author should, on every fresh appearance, exceed himself, in order to keep pace with the expectations of the public. Still each successive poem will be inquired for with eagerness, and it may be a matter of indifference to his Lordship, what the many may think of their purchase. We profess ourselves pleased to obtain productions like these from Lord Byron, provided he can do nothing better: and the repetition of similar publications, at uncertain intervals, would seem to betray in the Author a consciousness of not being able to achieve greater things. When, by a series of such performances as these, a writer has assured us all he can do, we begin to be let into the secret of what he *cannot* accomplish'. Such a sting would undoubtedly have bit into Byron's self-image as a responsive and commanding poet. See Josiah Conder, "Review Of The Siege of Corinth

be ‘the last production with which [he would] trespass on public patience ... for some years’, and then closely followed it up with *The Siege of Corinth* (1816) and *Parisina* (1816), *The Champion* declared that ‘He will and he won’t: he regrets having written at all and anon he writes again: he will not write for some years, and he cannot hold for a few weeks’ and that Byron was ‘forcing’ upon the public ‘as the food of the mind, what, if report be true, turns his own stomach’.¹⁰¹ Not only was he repetitive, but now Byron was, like Scott in *English Bards*, ‘foist[ing]’ ‘On public taste ... thy stale romance, / Though Murray with his Miller may combine / To yield thy muse just half-a-crown per line’.¹⁰²

Images of entrapment in the Eastern Tales thus do not arise from Byron’s guidance from Murray. Instead, Murray largely acted as a supportive influence encouraging Byron to break free of the repetition that had taken hold due to his knowledge of the marketplace. Instead, Byron’s frustrations emerged from his realisation that audiences had coopted his identity to ends he did not like, and that he had fallen into the trap of allowing them to do so. In *English Bards*, Byron scolded Moore for pandering to a female readership (ll. 283–288), criticised the role of the market in literary production (ll. 173–179), and attacked Scott for knowingly ‘foisting’ bad poetry upon his audience (ll. 171–172). Evidently Byron (and Murray) knew he was doing the same. Like Conrad, trapped in a prison partially built by his own actions, at this point Byron could not conceive of an existence outside of the paradigm that had built his fame. His audience had enforced their own poetic demands on his writing and pushed their interpretations of his identity upon him. In this sense they have acted as a creative, if frustrating, influence upon Byron, making him ‘live not in myself, but I become / Portion of that around me’.¹⁰³ It

And *Parisina*” in *The Eclectic Review*, 2nd Series, Vol.V., (March 1816, pp. 269–275 in *The Romantics Reviewed*, Part B, vol. 2, p. 733; and quoted in O’Connell, *A Poet and His Publisher*, p. 129.

¹⁰¹ Byron, ‘Preface’ to *The Corsair* in *Byron: The Complete Works*, vol. 3, p. 148 ; and ‘Review Of The Siege Of Corinth’ in *The Champion*, (February 1816), pp. 45–46, cited in *The Romantics Reviewed*, Part B, vol. 2, p. 523.

¹⁰² Also, in a letter to Shelley upon writing his new dramas following the Eastern Tales, Byron wrote ‘You see what it is to throw pearls to Swine—as long as I wrote the exaggerated nonsense which has corrupted the public taste—they applauded to the very echo—and now that I have really composed within these three or four years some things which would “not willingly be let die”—the whole herd snort and grumble and return to wallow in their mire. However, it is fit that I should pay the penalty of spoiling them—as no man has contributed more than me in my earlier compositions to produce that exaggerated & false taste—it is a fit retribution that anything [like a] classical production should be received as these plays have been treated.’ See Byron, ‘To Percy Bysshe Shelley, 20 May 1822’ in *Byron’s Letters and Journals*, vol. 9, p. 161; and ‘English Bards, ll. 172–174.

¹⁰³ Byron, *Childe Harold’s Pilgrimage*, Canto III, ll. 680–681.

would not be until after the personal crises of 1816 that Byron would willingly ‘change the sentence [he] deserve[d] to bear’ by rebelling against the balance of power created by his current model of authorship.¹⁰⁴

In 1816, with the break-up of his marriage to Annabella Milbanke in 1816, Byron was ostracised by the public and fleeing Britain to self-imposed exile in Europe. Lady Byron cited Byron’s wild attitudes and abusive behaviour towards her and their daughter Ada as the reasons for the split, but rumours of infidelity and incest with his half-sister, Augusta Leigh, have been mooted by contemporaries and critics ever since.¹⁰⁵ The breakdown nonetheless led to financial strain being placed upon the poet. To this date, Byron had apparently refused payment for his works stating that he ‘never yet received nor wished to receive a farthing’ from Murray and offering the copyrights freely to him and Byron’s friends.¹⁰⁶ However, as Peter Cochran has shown, Byron did privately accept remuneration for his works from Murray, receiving ‘a total of £3,850’ from his publisher prior to 1816.¹⁰⁷ Knowing Murray often enjoyed reading their correspondence in company, Byron’s denials likely feed into his own self-fashioning in the face of friends, as a lord unwilling to stoop to commerce with Murray the tradesman. Nevertheless, in 1816, with his finances stretched, Byron accepted Murray’s offer of £1,000 for his own use, never reverting to subterfuge again.¹⁰⁸ His exile though, was brought on not by his finances but mainly due to the damage the situation had dealt to his reputation, something his letters show he was all too aware of.¹⁰⁹

According to Mole, this public outcry was due largely to the reading patterns Byron and Murray had pioneered, whereby Byron’s mysterious personal life helped his audience to explain the unknown histories and unspoken sins of his characters: his characters were apparently a thin veil of Byron himself, with their emotions being identical to the poet’s own. With genuine personal scandal in his own life, the crimes of Byron’s

¹⁰⁴ Indeed, Byron’s situation, as I have highlighted in an above footnote, is similar to the scorpion in *The Giaour* who cannot fathom any other means of escape from its situation other than death. See Byron, *The Giaour*, ll. 423–432; and *The Corsair*, Canto III, l. 285.

¹⁰⁵ For more on the rumours surrounding Byron’s marriage split and his self-imposed exile, see Marchand, *Byron: A Biography*, vol. 2, pp. 563–608.

¹⁰⁶ Byron, ‘To Robert Charles Dallas, 17 February 1814’ in *Byron’s Letters and Journals*, vol. 4, p. 63.

¹⁰⁷ Peter Cochran, ‘Did Byron Take Money For His Work?’ in *The Byron Journal*, no.31 (2003), pp. 72–76 (p. 76).

¹⁰⁸ Whilst abroad the poet sold Newstead Abbey, the ancestral home of the Byrons, in order to free himself of debts. This also meant that Byron was no longer a landed Lord which, along with his circumstances, may explain his new mercantile attitude to literature. See Graham, p. 34

¹⁰⁹ For an example which will be explored more in the next chapter, see Byron, ‘To Douglas Kinnaid, 2 May 1822’ in *Byron’s Letters and Journals*, vol. 9, p. 152.

characters thus acted in a similar manner, apparently explaining to his audience the private reasons for his separation from Lady Byron.¹¹⁰ Due to his and Murray's marketing of Byron's works, as well as the method of interpreting Byron's texts they had encouraged, to the public, Byron appeared as what his Corsair or Manfred were: an isolated, violently passionate man haunted by an unspeakable past, a past that explained why Lady Byron had to leave him. This reading of Byron himself, then, developed from his and Murray's attempts to engineer how a Romantic audience read his works. But as Byron came to realise from his diverse fan-mail, audience responses were infinitely varied and thus almost impossible to comprehensively counter or govern.

As Andrew Franta highlights, in Byron's unpublished response to *Blackwood's Magazine's* 'Remarks On Don Juan' (1819), the poet rails that he has been 'accused of every monstrous vice by public rumour,—and private rancour' and asks 'Has not "the general voice of his Countrymen" long ago pronounced on this subject—sentence without trial—and condemnation without a charge?'¹¹¹ Such musings, I suggest, are the result of his interactions with audience best exemplified by his fan-mail.¹¹² From these and reviewers' responses, Byron recognised the very nature of public opinion as having no tangible shape or distinctive spokesperson. As Franta suggests, 'Byron recognises that the real force of judgement against him has to do with the anonymity of public opinion—the sense in which it cannot be answered because no one actually has it and has to justify it.'¹¹³ Byron is evidently aware of what has caused people to draw such conclusions as to the reasons of his marriage breakdown as he had previously manipulated their perceptions of him to boost his fame through a construction of artificial intimacy, which then led to interpretations beyond his control. Byron and Murray had attempted to mould public opinion of him, but with a genuine personal crisis in the poet's life, that carefully formed image of Byron turned against him in that it must (for the

¹¹⁰ Mole argues that Byron's use of a style of poetry reliant on the leaking of private information, exacerbated Byron's position following the breakup of his marriage in that his texts became evidence in the public realm of his supposed crimes. The result, according to Mole, was that Byron rejected his traditional audience. For more, see Mole, pp. 115–130.

¹¹¹ Quoted in Andrew Franta, *Romanticism and the Rise of the Mass Public*, (Cambridge; Cambridge University Press, 2007), p. 37.

¹¹² As I have highlighted, 'Remarks On Don Juan' was unpublished, meaning that the response to *Blackwood's* did not actively determine Byron's relationship with audience. However, it allows us to see the culminating effects responses to Byron's works had upon the poet's thinking. It demonstrates to us, explicitly, that Byron was aware that he had to write in relation to an undefined and enormously varied audience that would be (and would respond in ways), despite his and Murray's efforts, beyond his control.

¹¹³ Franta, p. 38.

public) explain the crisis. With this scandal the pair had come to realise how very little power they actually had to control that image. Franta shows that Byron's self-exile constituted an acknowledgement that, in the realm of public opinion, the difference between truth and falsehood has ceased to matter: his encouragement of speculation about himself to a varied and divided audience, had opened a Pandora's box of condemnation when his life experienced genuine turmoil.¹¹⁴

Public Relations In *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*, Canto III

Just as Byron had felt his audience turn from him, in *Childe Harold*, Canto III critics contend that he seemingly does the same to them. For instance, Mole claims that Byron views his 'reception [as] an extraneous and unimportant adjunct' whereby he rejects 'fame as "the thirst of youth"', and 'asserts that he is not "so young as to regard men's frown or smile / As loss or guerdon of a glorious lot"'.¹¹⁵ Byron outlines his dislike of his audience by describing the world as a 'peopled desert' and describes 'The hum / Of human cities' as 'torture' to him. 'To join the crushing crowd' is for Byron to be 'doom'd to inflict or bear' the burden they have provided him for so long. Trapped by his audience, Byron asserts that 'mingling with the herd had penn'd me in their fold'. But in Canto III, whereas his audience would demand that his character (and Byron) 'yield dominion of his mind / To spirits against whom his own rebelled' (by writing pandering, repetitive poetry), Harold finds a way to 'breathe without mankind'.¹¹⁶ In this view, like Harold, Byron is also claiming that he could go on without the audience that had celebrated him. Seemingly, with no single figure representative of public opinion to persuade, Byron must merely exile himself from them.

But this does not mean he completely disregarded the idea of an audience in the construction of his text. I propose that *Childe Harold*, Canto III can also be seen as a brief attempt at a public relations campaign on the part of the poet, and as the start of a process in which Byron reevaluated his position in relation to his incredibly diverse audience, a reevaluation that ultimately led him to the playful and experimental styles of *Beppo* and *Don Juan*. Mole argues that in Canto III, Byron turned to his daughter Ada as a representative of the idealised reader and thus rejected the intimate relationship

¹¹⁴ Ibid.

¹¹⁵ See Mole, p. 118; and Byron, *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*, Canto III, ll. 1045, 1046–1047.

¹¹⁶ See Mole, pp. 120–121; and Byron, *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*, Canto III, ll. 690, 682–683, 679, 652, 105–106, 108.

with his audience that he had cultivated in his earlier works.¹¹⁷ Due to her unique relationship with Byron, he assumed that she would, one day, place a fair construction on his words, disregarding the furore of public opinion. However, this can also be seen as an attempt by Byron to rehabilitate his public image in relation to his readership. The stanza reads:

Is thy face like thy mother's, my fair child!
Ada! sole daughter of my house and heart?
When last I saw thy young blue eyes they smiled,
But then we parted,—not as now we part,
But with a hope. —

Awaking with a start,
The waters heave around me; and on high
Whither I know not; but the hour's gone by,

When Albion's lessening shores could grieve or glad mine eye.¹¹⁸

Mole argues that the first stanza separated by the break inserted in the fifth line, mimics the poet's separation from his daughter and sets the poem up as outward looking and interpersonal, directing its intimacy solely at his daughter who, in the future, would read it.¹¹⁹ However, it could also be the utilisation of a tactic Byron had used in his *Eastern Tales*: the deliberate exclusion of information through narrative gaps. By incorporating the line break, Byron makes the reader question, much like the narrative gaps of *The Giaour*, what Byron has left unspoken.¹²⁰ The audience, then, is invited to speculate over what can only be known in the intimacy shared between a parent and their daughter.

By framing Ada as his idealised reader and directing his traditional construction of affinity solely at her, Byron further manipulated the tactic he had used to ensure his commercial success: the 'hermeneutic of intimacy'. Unlike Ianthe in the earlier cantos, Ada was a specific figure with a position that no one else could imaginatively occupy. As Mole states, 'She represented both an intensification of the hermeneutic of intimacy

¹¹⁷ See Mole, p. 123-126.

¹¹⁸ Byron, *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*, Canto III, ll. 1-9.

¹¹⁹ Mole, pp. 123-126; and see Byron, *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*, Canto III, l. 5.

¹²⁰ Mole aptly proposes that in *The Giaour*, the reader fills the narrative gaps left by the poem's fragmentary structure with their knowledge of Byron's personal life, thus working with the 'hermeneutic of intimacy' he describes. See Mole, pp. 60-65.

and its failure. It intensified because it became concentrated on a single figure with an unassailable claim to intimacy with Byron. It failed because that imagined relationship could no longer serve as a pattern for other readers.¹²¹ However, I would argue that it did not fail but merely invited his readers' sympathy by letting them witness a very private relationship between father and daughter. If one party speaks to another, with the intention that a third party is witness to it, that third party is still intimate with the other parties. By writing Ada into his poem as the idealised reader and focussing his intimate connection solely on her, Byron was attempting to construct a new image of himself that would rehabilitate him in the eyes of his readership: that of the sad, fond father.¹²² Byron reorientates the relationship he had with his readers, but he continues to recognise that they play a constitutive part in the creation of his work. The indisputable nature of public opinion had forced Byron to confront the frustrations he had with the literary culture of his day. His personal circumstances also meant that his frustrations bubbled over, making Byron reimagine his relationship with an audience that had previously adored him, imposed upon, and then disapproved of him. But this again can be understood as an intentional recalibration of his publicly perceived image from the 'mad, bad Lord Byron' to that of the caring, exiled father. The poem after all was not written directly and privately to Ada, but still published en masse to an audience eager to read (and read into) Byron.

Thus, whilst Byron appears to reject his audience in *Childe Harold, Canto III*, he also consciously utilises their position in relation to witnessing his intimacy with his daughter as a tactic in public relations. The relationship is still one of intimacy as his audience are invited to witness a private relationship, although they are no longer its target. The turn to Ada can consequently be viewed as Byron's attempt to reorient his relationship with audience and mould public opinion away from the damning verdict of 1816, towards a more palatable image of a father who cared only for his daughter (and not for capricious fame). Thus whilst Byron claims to be newly independent from an audience that rejected him, he still acknowledges that they constitute an important creative influence upon his works.

Conclusion

¹²¹ Ibid., p. 124.

¹²² Indeed this image may specifically appeal to that previously discussed strata of his audience of anonymous, female fans (like his wife on their first encounter) who wished to 'save' Byron and rehabilitate him from his 'unspeakable past' and sins.

The Byronic hero and the consequent uproar it caused may never have occurred without Murray's crucial interventions in Byron's *Childe Harold*. The poem itself thus stands as a testament to Byron and Murray's negotiation over Byron's image in the public realm. Whilst the pair initially had competing visions for the poem, Byron deferred to Murray's knowledge of the marketplace, cooperating with him in order to further his own celebrity and literary success. In doing so, the pair attempted to construct an artificial intimacy with audiences which encouraged erotic desire for the poet.

However, once in the public realm, Byron's texts were open enough to allow multiple desires to be formed around the poet and thus disparate interpretations of Byron's identity, ultimately frustrating the poet. Indeed, his audience thus acted as an imaginative force upon him, with the market sculpting his identity towards the very model of poetry that he had decried in *English Bards*. The instability between audience, poet, and publisher, then, evidently created a poetry that displayed Byron's frustrations and, with a genuine crisis exacerbated by this artificial intimacy, eventually led to the public relations campaign of *Childe Harold, Canto III*. But this would also lead him to something else.

Whilst Byron was finishing *Childe Harold, Canto IV*, he was already in the process of envisaging a very different relationship with his audience in his composition of *Beppo*: one based on playfully challenging those audiences, their readings, and their values, which would reach its zenith in *Don Juan*. In this endeavour, Murray initially supported Byron, encouraging him to break free of his Eastern Tales and the current public perception of him. But even this responsive relationship between publisher and poet would come to be challenged and eventually break down upon the publication of Byron's most controversial poem: *Don Juan*. As I shall demonstrate in the next chapter, this break was caused primarily by the growing instability between Murray and Byron over the poet's intentions towards audience and the rehabilitation (or lack thereof) of Byron's public persona.

Chapter Three: Byron Playing With An Audience - *Beppo: A Venetian Tale* (1818) and *Don Juan* (1819–1824)

After requesting a poem ‘a la *Beppo*,’ and reading the first drafts of *Don Juan*, Murray suggested his own idea for Juan: ‘Your history of the plan of the progress of *Don Juan* is very entertaining, but I am clear for sending him to hell, because he may favour us with some of the characters whom he finds there’.¹ Byron’s response was blunt: ‘You ask me for the plan of Donny Johnny—I have no plan—I had no plan—but I had or have the materials’.² The exchange is revealing of Byron’s newfound attitude to writing in exile and the increasing divergence between the partners. It would not be Juan who was banished by Byron, but Murray. In 1823, he was replaced as publisher by John Hunt. But the breakdown in partnership between Murray and Byron was not based on the publisher’s supposed ‘squeamishness’ about the poem, as some scholars have proposed; after all, as Byron remarked, a ‘publisher can hardly help it—it is their nature’.³ Alternatively, building upon O’Connell’s blueprint of their relationship, I shall argue that the Murray-Byron partnership was fractured by Byron’s newfound playfulness, experimentation, and desire to challenge the audiences that had ostracised him. Murray simply did not understand that Byron no longer wrote to appease the ‘orthodox’. Instead, his new method of engagement was determined by playing with his audience(s) and their reading patterns, meaning Murray’s guidance was no longer so important. With Byron and his audience as the driving forces behind *Don Juan*, the once-stable bond between the poet and publisher frayed beyond repair.

Beppo and *Don Juan* are the result of Byron’s negotiation and engagement with the implications of his popularity amongst an incredibly diverse and assertive audience who had interpreted his texts and identity in ways he did not like. Whereas *English Bards* represented the moment Byron realised he must engage with Romantic literary culture in order for his poetry to function effectively, the writing of *Beppo* and *Don Juan* acts as another moment of realisation and alteration for the poet. As highlighted, Klancher argues that ‘audiences are not simply aggregates of readers. They are complicated social and textual formations; they have interpretative tendencies and ideological

¹ Quoted in Moyra Haslett, *Byron’s Don Juan and the Don Juan Legend*, (Oxford; Clarendon Press, 1997), p. 86.

² Byron, ‘To John Murray, 12 August 1819’ in *Byron’s Letters and Journals*, vol. 6, p. 207.

³ Byron, ‘To Douglas Kinnaird, 28 October 1820’ in *Ibid.*, vol. 7, p. 255.

contours.’⁴ Mirroring this, Byron’s fan-mail of Chapter Two indicates that, as Byron was aware, his audience responded in multiple and unpredictable ways. I shall contend that, rather than rejecting his audience as many critics have argued, in these two poems, Byron actively utilises and mirrors the various ‘contours’ and ‘interpretative tendencies’ that he had encountered within his audience, to reflect on his own fame and the unpredictable culture of Romantic readership. I shall argue that the inconsistency of responses to his works from his increasingly large and diverse audience, encouraged Byron towards the theatricality of *Beppo*, the uncertain identity and development of characters in both poems, and the deployment and deliberation of chance in *Don Juan*. To reiterate a point I have been stressing in all three chapters: Byron’s poetry is the product of a tense but fundamentally collaborative relationship that involves Byron and his publishers grappling with the implications of a startlingly diverse audience.⁵

The two poems nonetheless represent a radical departure in the terms of his relationship with audience. Whereas Byron’s audience had been considered by the poet either as an ally aligned with Byron’s attacks on Romantic literary culture (in *English Bards*), or the target of an intimate relationship, in *Don Juan* and, to a lesser degree, *Beppo*, Byron’s audiences become the primary target of his attacks and play. Having supposedly rejected his audience in *Childe Harold*, Canto III and Canto IV, Byron experiments with the audience-poet relationship in these two poems, utilising the very reading patterns he had encouraged them to use earlier in order to challenge those patterns, their assumptions, and cultural beliefs. Whereas Byron, compromising to Murray’s market perspicacity, had attempted to appeal to audience desire in his sculpting of a public persona (writing repetitive, ‘revealing’ Eastern Tales), he had realised that by releasing his image to public interpretation he had very little control at all, especially in an era of increasing moral panic.⁶ *Don Juan* represents Byron’s experimentation and

⁴ Klancher, *The Making of English Reading Audiences*, p. 6.

⁵ I refer to ‘publishers’ here since during *Don Juan*’s composition, as I have said, Byron switches his publisher from Murray to Hunt. However, I shall only explore Murray’s attempted interventions in the poem for two reasons: firstly, Hunt’s approach to Byron was very much to allow him the creative freedom to direct the poem where he willed regardless of his own views of audience. His publishing style was rather laissez faire compared to Murray’s interventionist method. This makes Murray’s often unsuccessful attempts to sculpt the polyvocal text, in comparison to Byron’s intentions, more interesting since it represents a change in the dynamic from the Byron/Murray partnership during the Eastern Tales. Secondly, the limitations of this project do not allow me to explore, in enough depth, the Byron/Hunt working relationship.

⁶ Wilson argues that in the Post-Waterloo era, the middle classes had taken an increasingly moralistic turn, resulting in a far larger part of his audience disapproving of Byron’s public persona and writings. Byron’s fan-mail, flooded with letters trying to ‘save’ him, and his exile demon-

play with the various ‘ideological contours’ (represented by interpretations of himself and his works) within his audience, at times entertaining his more liberal readers, whilst offending the moralists (or Murray’s ‘Orthodox’ readers), all in pursuit of highlighting the shortcomings of late British Romantic culture.⁷ I shall demonstrate how such experimentation can be seen as Byron grappling with the implications of his fame, including his impressions of his diverse audiences indicative in his previously discussed fan-mail.

Finally, I shall analyse how the poet utilised *Don Juan* to engage with the idea of his texts and reputation living on in posterity. I intend to demonstrate that, in rejecting his traditional British audience, Byron already had an eye to a far more extensive, differently configured, deferred audience with whom he was negotiating—or, more tentatively, attempting to negotiate—the terms of his remembrance. As with all of the writers I will be discussing, Byron was fascinated with Wordsworthian notions of posterity that he seemed at times to reject. Utilising work by Andrew Bennett and Emily Rohrbach, I shall demonstrate how Byron embraced aspects of Wordsworth’s ideology in his writing, but radically modified it based upon his own experience of the Romantic literary marketplace, setting *Don Juan* up as the manifesto by which he believed his name may (or may not) live on.⁸

Beppo As Performance

In his journal, Byron recalled taking the stage at Drury Lane:

In the Pantomime of 1815–16—there was a Representation of the Masquerade of 1814—given by “us Youth” of Watier’s Club to Wellington & Co.—Douglas Kinnaird—& one or two others with myself—put on Masques—and went *on* the stage amongst the [hoi polloi]—to see the effect of a theatre from the Stage.—It is very grand.—Douglas danced amongst the figuranti too—& they

strates the increasing moral limitations upon the poet. As we have seen, unspoken crimes became evidence enough of real crimes. With middle-class morality rising, the aristocracy realised they had to lead the way. See Ben Wilson, *Decency and Disorder*.

⁷ I use the term ‘at times’ as, in the poem, Byron occasionally offers a metaphorical olive branch to these readers too, in an attempt to demonstrate to them that, just like his enigmatic protagonist, their views need not be permanent or so rigorously and faithfully applied to poetry, as I shall discuss. In other words, they should not take *Don Juan* so seriously.

⁸ See Bennett, *Culture of Posterity*, pp. 179–199; and Emily Rohrbach, *Modernity’s Mist: British Romanticism and the Poetics of Anticipation*, (New York, NY; Fordham University Press, 2015), pp. 134–158.

were puzzled to find out who we were—as being more than their number.—It is odd enough that D.K. & I should have been both at the *real* Masquerade—& afterwards in the Mimic one of the same—on the stage of D.L. Theatre.⁹

According to Peter Graham, the quotation demonstrates Byron's love of ironic mystification, of acting out something that both was and was not his life. Graham suggests that Byron took the stage, not to be seen, but to see the stage from the actors' perspectives.¹⁰ By donning his 'Masque', Byron obscured his identity and revelled in the play of being 'both at the *real* Masquerade—& afterwards in the Mimic one of the same' as well as the reactions of the audience. I propose that the relationship with audiences Byron attempted to create in *Beppo* (and, later, *Don Juan*) were the result of his thoughts on the connection actors held to their audiences which he had experienced at Drury Lane, as well as his realization that he could not wholly engineer audience interpretation in the period provided by his fan mail and the personal crises of 1816.

Whilst *Beppo* follows its protagonist during Venice's Carnival (a liminal space of obscure identity allowing rules to be overturned), it is in *Beppo*'s narrator that we find Byron's most active use of theatricality to play with his audience. Whilst Byron's works and conduct until 1817 had contained elements of exhibitionism (Byron's marketing of *Childe Harold*, for instance), in *Beppo*, Byron's narrator explicitly made himself and his process of composition overtly part of the poem's theatricality. Byron's narrator is not only inconsistent and digressive, but actively draws attention to such foibles, highlighting to his audience a degree of play and theatre.

In Stanza 21, after describing Venice, Byron's narrator introduces the story with an immediately unstable statement: 'But to my story.—'Twas some years ago, / It may be thirty, forty, more or less'. The lines convey to his audience that his narrator may not be faithful to the actual events he describes, just as much as his next concession about Laura when he states 'And so we'll call her Laura, if you'll please, / Because it slips into my verse with ease'.¹¹ Byron's narrator draws attention to the fact that he is not only inaccurate, but actively subordinating plot details to rhyme scheme.

⁹ Byron, 'Detached Thoughts, no.70' in *Byron's Letters and Journals*, vol. 9, pp. 36–37.

¹⁰ Peter Graham, 'His Grand Show: Byron And The Myth Of Mythmaking' in Frances Wilson, *Byromania: Portraits of the Artist in Nineteenth- and Twentieth-Century Culture*, p. 26.

¹¹ Lord Byron, *Beppo: A Venetian Tale* in *Byron: The Complete Works*, vol. 4, ll. 161–162, 167–168.

Similar digressions take place in Stanzas 41–53 and 60–64. Stanzas 41–49 represent Byron’s narrator digressing from Beppo’s tale to his thoughts on England, before he declares:

But to my tale of Laura,—for I find
Digression is a sin, that by degrees
Becomes tedious to my mind,
And, therefore, may the reader too displease—
The gentle reader, who may wax unkind,
And caring little for the author’s ease,
Insist on knowing what he means, a hard
And hapless situation for a bard.¹²

Byron acknowledges that his narrator and his audience are likely to find ‘digression’ ‘tedious’ yet continues to digress all the same. Such an acknowledgement creates a two-fold effect: Byron, unlike in previous works, is explicitly acknowledging that, to an extent, his audience are playing a role in shaping his text in that he vows to avoid digression for their sake. However, by continuing to digress, Byron’s narrator is also theatrically illuminating the limits of his consideration for his audience. He highlights that, in order to get to the tale’s conclusion, they must humour the play of its mercurial author. Indeed, Byron acknowledges that his audience ‘car[e] little for [his] ease’ and may be led to ‘Insist on knowing what he means’ which, as he has experienced, is a ‘hapless situation’ for him. As I have discussed in relation to Byron’s fan-mail, the deliberate mysteries Byron incorporated into his texts to guide audience interpretation were actively read to a myriad of different conclusions depending on the reader’s inclinations. ‘Caring little’ for Byron, his audience thus demanded (or imposed) answers that suited their own interpretations of him and his poetry.¹³ It was, in other words, a ‘hapless situation’, but a situation that Byron began increasingly to find creatively liberating.

In a later stanza, Byron’s narrator draws attention to the difficulty of maintaining his vow not to digress:

To turn,—and to return;—the Devil take it!

¹² Ibid., ll. 393–400.

¹³ As I have shown, this led to speculative fan-mail, such as those I have discussed, and Byron feeling ‘ravished’ by his audience.

This story slips for ever through my fingers,
 Because, just as the stanza likes to make it,
 It needs must be—and so it rather lingers;
 This form of verse began, I can't well break it,
 But must keep time and tune like public singers;
 But if I once get through my present measure,
 I'll take another when I'm next at leisure.¹⁴

Despite his vow to his audience, Byron's 'story slips for ever through [his] fingers' due to his subordination of plot to the way 'the stanza likes to make it'. Byron's narrator, then, dramatically highlights, again, that he is performing for his audience and at the whim of 'This form of verse'. That audience, whilst being a shaping factor in his poem, must wait 'at [Byron's] leisure' for him to finish the poem.¹⁵

Digression, though, is nothing new in Byron's texts. *Childe Harold, Canto I*, for instance, contains examples of Byron's narrator digressing when, in Stanzas 29–34 his narrator deviates from Harold's tales in order to describe Spain.¹⁶ Once Harold's backdrop is provided, the reader naturally assumes Byron will return to his character's narrative. He does not. Instead, Byron digresses into meditations on Spain, its history, and Britain's intervention in The Peninsula War, for sixty stanzas until the canto's end with only brief mentions of Harold, which are only to justify his digressions.¹⁷ Paul Curtis states that the 'effectiveness of digression is that it reveals (or gives the impression that it reveals) to the reader a glimpse of the "secret geometries" of the poem, the inner workings behind the facade of the performance'.¹⁸ In *Childe Harold*, Byron's digressions work to hint at the poet's own thoughts creating a stable image of the poet as akin to Harold. However, in *Beppo*, Byron's friendly and digressionary narrator (who theatrically acknowledges audience influence upon the text) explicitly invites his audience to

¹⁴ Byron, *Beppo*, ll. 497–504.

¹⁵ This is again acknowledged at *Beppo*'s close when Byron apologises to them when he states 'Which being finished, here the story ends: / 'Tis to be wished it had been sooner done, / But stories somehow lengthen when begun'. Ibid., ll. 790–792.

¹⁶ Byron, *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*, Canto I, ll. 333–395.

¹⁷ In my stanza count, I count 'To Inez' as well. One example of Byron briefly returning to Harold's tale before turning, once more, to his own meditations, Byron writes: 'Full swiftly Harold wends his lonely way / Where proud Sevilla triumphs unsubdued' which then leads onto a meditation on the city's fate. See Ibid., ll. 477–478.

¹⁸ Paul M. Curtis, 'Byron And Digression' in *Palgrave Advances in Byron Studies*, ed. Jane Stabler, (Basingstoke; Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), p. 65.

see the ‘secret geometries’ of the poem whilst, crucially, obscuring Byron’s identity by being so unreliable and unstable.

Whilst Byron’s digressions in *Beppo* can thus be seen to develop from his desire to experiment with his public perception in the face of audiences who commandeered that image, it is also the product of his newly deployed rhyme scheme: ottava-rima. Unlike Byron’s *Eastern Tales*, the poem presents itself through the eyes of his meandering narrator and as of being extempore in which digression, according to the narrator’s thoughts, naturally occurs. Angela Esterhammer highlights that ‘even though Byron often revised his manuscripts extensively before publication or between editions, he is almost universally credited with the ability to compose poetry extempore.’¹⁹ This impression is built upon Byron’s digressions. Indeed, unlike the rushed drafts of his *Eastern Tales*, Byron laboured meticulously over *Beppo*.²⁰ What seemed spontaneous was actually carefully staged in order to suggest to his audience that Byron could produce poetry spontaneously. Esterhammer highlights that Byron witnessed the performances of improvvisatori, and though he was sceptical, his responses to them display an ‘empathy with the conditions that circumscribed the creative process of these extemporising oral poets’.²¹ She highlights that Medwin quotes Byron as stating ‘The inspiration of the improviser is quite a separate talent, a consciousness of his own powers, his own elocution—the wondering and applauding audience,—all conspire to give him confidence.’²² Byron evidently recognised that the improvvisatori was a social and public poet, whose verses arose out of the ‘imminent challenge to perform and the immediate relation to an audience’.²³

¹⁹ Angela Esterhammer, ‘Spontaneity, Immediacy, And Improvisation In Romantic Poetry’ in *A Companion to Romantic Poetry*, ed. Charles Mahoney, (Oxford; Wiley-Blackwell, 2011), p. 330.

²⁰ Truman Guy Steffan demonstrates Byron’s meticulous care and attention to the construction of *Beppo*. This stands in opposition to the rushed nature of his compositions of his *Eastern Tales*. See Truman Guy Steffan, ‘The Devil a Bit of Our *Beppo*’ in *Philological Quarterly*, XXXII, (1953), pp. 154–171; Indeed, *Beppo* directly references the Improvisatori to highlight the way the Count accompanying Laura looks down on their extemporising due to his classical education and views on poetry: ‘He patroniz’d the Improvisatori, / Nay, could himself extempore some stanzas, / Wrote rhymes, sang songs, could also tell a story, / Sold pictures, and was skilful in the dance as / Italians can be, though in this their glory / Must surely yield the palm to that which France has; / In short, he was a perfect Cavaliero, / And to his very valet seemed a hero.’ See Byron, *Beppo*, ll. 257–264.

²¹ Esterhammer, ‘Spontaneity, Immediacy, And Improvisation In Romantic Poetry’, p. 330.

²² Quoted in *Ibid*.

²³ *Ibid*.

This Italian tradition of improvisation resonated with Byron's self-construction as a responsive poet who engaged with immediate impressions and an evolving culture and recorded these in a digressive style. Indeed *The London Magazine* remarked:

Such, therefore, as [Lord Byron's] poetry was, such must have been his conversation, for both were unpremeditated, spontaneous effusions of the perennial spring within his bosom ... He was an English Improvisatore, and when we say this, we do not mean that he was a mere stringer of musical sentences; but such an Improvisatore as an Englishman might and an Italian could not be.²⁴

In addition to the examples of digression discussed above, Byron's narrator acts almost as a tour guide to Venice, leading his audience through the city and adapting his poetry to suit the scene. Stanza 41 displays Byron's construction of the poem clearly by identifying his portrayal of Venice as 'much like the back scene of a play, / Or melodrame, which people flock to see, / When the first act is ended by a dance, / In vineyards copied from the south of France'.²⁵ Byron is admitting that the setting of his poem is exactly that: a pretty setting which he enjoys describing, not an important part of the plot (as it might be in Scott's poetry) or a landscape that the poet has thought deeply about (as in Wordsworth). It merely acts in bolstering his audience's impression that he is an improvisational poet, performing for his audience the incredible capability of adapting to environmental impressions, bending rhyme and plot to suit them.

In his construction of *Beppo*, then, Byron subordinates plot to both description and the digressive thoughts of his narrator in order to highlight the theatrical nature of his role as author. Much like his appearance at Drury Lane, he takes the stage not to be seen (as he attempts to obscure his identity), but to witness the effects his mysterious appearance has upon his audience. *Beppo* stands as the first example of Byron, following the commandeering of his identity by his audience around 1816, attempting to rebalance the relationship between that audience and himself by acknowledging their role in the creation of his texts, but actively attempting to obscure their public perceptions of

²⁴ Quoted in Ibid.

²⁵ Drummond Bone highlights other examples of this in stanzas 11 and 12, which display that art and artificiality take precedence over the tale of *Beppo*, with the 'pretty faces' of the Venetians, the 'Venuses of Titian's', and 'Manfrini's palace' all described. Such intervening description occurs throughout the poem, such as in Stanza 46 where the narrator is suddenly reminded of the beauty of Venetian ladies and distracted from his tale. See Drummond Bone, 'Childe Harold's Pilgrimage IV, Don Juan and Beppo' in *The Cambridge Companion to Byron*, p. 165; and Byron, *Beppo*, ll. 325–328.

him through his narrator's digression, 'improvisation', and inconsistency. Thus, Byron presents himself as so evidently a showman by acknowledging that he depends on their continued interest, but equally undercuts their previous readings of him by demonstrating that he has no deep truth or 'secret history' to communicate. All he offers is play. *Beppo*'s narrator thus undercuts his audience's reading of Byron as reliably lurking behind his characters in order to blur and confuse his own public image. The narrator's instability claims a certain authorial power back for Byron, but equally it depends—quite explicitly—on an interaction with an audience whose own instability he had come to recognise, and which his new style of poetry mirrored.²⁶ As he put it in a characteristic digression, directed to an audience he hopes will respond: '*What after all, are all things—but a Show?*'²⁷

Byron's Challenges To Romantic Readers

Writing to Moore after *Beppo*'s success, Byron stated:

I have finished the first canto (a long one, of about 180 octaves) of a poem in the style and manner of "Beppo", encouraged by the good success of the same. It is called "Don Juan", and is meant to be a little quietly facetious upon everything. But I doubt whether it is not—at least, as far as it has yet gone—too free for these very modest days. However, I shall try the experiment, anonymously; and if it don't take, it will be discontinued.²⁸

Even after only the first canto, Byron was well aware that his 'experimental' *Don Juan*, retaining the style of *Beppo*, might be 'too free' in the climate that he wrote, and so it proved. *Blackwood's* responded to the first two cantos by declaring:

[T]he great genius of the man seems to have been throughout exerted to its utmost strength, in devising every possible method of pouring scorn upon every element of good or noble nature in the hearts of his readers. Love—honour—

²⁶ I shall demonstrate later that Byron's use of ottava-rima, digression, and shifting identity is developed even further in *Don Juan*, in order to directly challenge and play with his audience's notion of himself, their reading habits, and cultural beliefs, even more explicitly than in *Beppo*.

²⁷ Byron, *Don Juan*, Canto VII, l. 16.

²⁸ Byron, 'To Thomas Moore, 19 September 1818' in *Byron's Letters and Journals*, vol. 6, pp. 67–68.

patriotism—religion, are mentioned only to be scoffed at and derided, as if their sole resting place were, or ought to be, in the bosoms of fools. It appears, in short, as if this miserable man, having exhausted every species of sensual gratification—having drained the cup of sin even to its bitterest dregs, were resolved to shew us that he is no longer a human being, even in his frailties;—but a cool unconcerned fiend, laughing with detestable glee over the whole of the better and worse elements of which human life is composed—treating well nigh with equal derision the most pure of virtues, and the most odious of vices—dead alike to the beauty of the one, and the deformity of the other—a mere heartless despiser of that frail but noble humanity, whose type was never exhibited in a shape of more deplorable degradation than in his own contemptuously distinct delineation of himself.²⁹

Outrage like this, repeated across many periodicals, was something Byron had deliberately courted. Writing to Kinnaird following his exile, Byron declared:

I shall not be deterred by any outcry—they hate me—and I detest them—I mean your present Public—but they shall not interrupt the march of my mind—nor prevent me from telling the tyrants who are attempting to trample on all thought—that their thrones will yet be rocked to their foundation.³⁰

He also told his friend that ‘I can assure you that I will not swerve from my purpose—though I should share a lot of all who have ever done good or attempted to instruct or better mankind.—I can sustain their persecution’.³¹ The first cantos of *Don Juan* represented Byron’s challenge to Romantic literary culture and the power of audiences who

²⁹ *Blackwood’s* attitude to *Don Juan*, though, was much more mixed than mere condemnation. Indeed, the magazine often attempted to emulate or mirror the poem’s own performative qualities, especially in series like the *Noctes Ambrosianae*, much like Byron had attempted in *English Bards’* relationship to *The Edinburgh*. For examples of this, see Richard Cronin, *Paper Pellets: British Literary Culture After Waterloo*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), pp. 39–41, 105–106; Mark Parker, *Literary Magazines and British Romanticism*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), pp. 81–90; and “‘Remarks On Don Juan’ in *Blackwood’s Edinburgh Magazine*’, Vol.V, (August 1819), pp. 512–518, in *The Romantics Reviewed*, Part B, vol. 1, p. 144.

³⁰ Byron, ‘To Douglas Kinnaird, 2 May 1822’ in *Byron’s Letters and Journals*, vol. 9, p. 152.

³¹ Byron’s cavalier attitude here, though, is not entirely honest but represents more braggadocio to friends. Indeed, earlier in the same letter, Byron writes that ‘As long as I can find a single

had ostracised him in 1816, lasting from 1819 until his death in 1824. Despite this, Richard Cronin estimates that ‘*Don Juan* was the most widely read poem of the age’, citing *The Monthly Magazine* that ‘scarcely any poem of the present day has been more generally read, or its continuation more eagerly and impatiently awaited’.³² By taking into account the interpretative tendencies Byron’s fan-mail discussed earlier, we can see that the poem responds to the implications of Byron’s fame and the certain appropriations of his identity by increasingly prominent sections of his audience and critics.

One example of this is addressed specifically to those female readers who appropriated Byron’s identity in the exploration of their own desires.³³ The poet portrays their appropriations through the contradictions inherent between Juan and the commanding women he encounters. Susan Wolfson highlights that Juan, in his presentation, is regularly portrayed as feminine in comparison to masculine men, and often cross-dresses.³⁴ He is described as ‘half-smother’d’ in Julia’s bedding, fleeing without ‘his only garment’ into the night, whilst she is of a ‘stature tall’ with ‘handsome eyes’; Juan is washed up naked on the beach, transformed into Haidee’s toy-boy and dressed in breeches which he fails to fill (which, by comparison, belong to her hyper-masculine piratical father, Lambro), whilst Haidee is described as ‘Even of the highest for a female mould’ and brave in defending her ‘boy’ (as Juan is frequently labelled) against her father.³⁵ After his encounters with such women, Juan is often left used and worn, such as when Catherine the Great, having a ‘preference of a boy to men much bigger’ leaves Juan in a ‘condition / Which augured of the dead’.³⁶ Much like being ‘sacrificed to them

reader I will publish my mind (while it lasts)’, indicating his knowledge of the fact his texts exist only so long as they are in dialogue with someone to listen to them. See Byron, ‘To Douglas Kinnaird, 26 January 1822’ in *Ibid.*, p. 94.

³² St Clair also estimates that over 100,000 copies of *Don Juan* were sold, in various editions, throughout Byron’s lifetime due in large part to piracies of the poem. See St Clair, *Reading Nation*, p. 333; and ‘Review of *Don Juan*, Cantos VI–VIII’ in *The Monthly Magazine*, Vol. LVI, (September 1823), pp. 112–115 in *The Romantics Reviewed*, part B, vol. 4, p. 1705, quoted in Cronin, *Paper Pellets*, pp. 172–173.

³³ This is best exemplified by ‘Echo’, the anonymous fan who wrote to Byron, discussed in the previous chapter.

³⁴ Susan J. Wolfson, ‘Don Juan And The Shiftings Of Gender’ in *Palgrave Advances in Byron Studies*, pp. 260–261.

³⁵ Byron, *Don Juan*, Canto I, ll. 1320, 1486, Canto II, 1273–1280, 925.

³⁶ Indeed, in an echo of his relationship to commandeering female fans, Byron states on the relationship he struck up with Teresa Giuccioli in which he became a ‘Cavalier Servente’ (or sanctioned lover of an Italian, married lady): ‘A man actually becomes a piece of property’. Similarly, in *Beppo*, these attitudes, demonstrating that this was a continuing frustration for the poet, are expressed in the lines: ‘But “Cavalier Servente” is the phrase / Used in politest circles to express / This supernumerary slave, who stays / Close to the lady as a part of dress, / Her word the only law which he obeys. / His is no sinecure, as you may guess; / Coach, servants, gondola, he goes to call, / And carries fan and tippet, gloves and shawl.’ See Byron, ‘To Richard Belgrave

& by them', Byron, from his fan-mail and society encounters, already knew the feeling of becoming a like a piece of fetish property to women (much like Harriet Wilson taking '[Don Juan] to bed' with her).³⁷ Juan, then, much like Byron's reproduction of his Eastern Tales, finds himself locked in the Turkish harem, being asked 'Christian, canst thou love?' or, more appropriately, in what ways he, as concubine, can fulfil Gulbeyaz's desires.³⁸

Whilst Byron's masculine women in *Don Juan* can thus be seen as a representation of those readers who appropriated and sculpted his own identity to fulfil their own desires, Juan's weak resistance can also be seen as Byron playing on his own resistance.³⁹ His attempts to assert his own machismo with the protagonists of his Eastern Tales, are mocked when Juan adopts exaggerated and ill-fitting military dress in Catherine's Russian court, only to appear 'But still so like, that Psyche were more clever / Than some wives (who make blunders no less stupid) / If she had not mistaken him for Cupid'.⁴⁰ Despite Juan's attempts, he is still reduced to the 'Cupid' of 'some wives[']' desires. As Moyra Haslett has demonstrated, *Don Juan* as a title for an upcoming work leads Byron's audience to anticipate a tale of a man seducing women.⁴¹ Instead they received a poem whereby supposedly pious women were the lustful seducers of a naive young man. Such a reversal can be seen as Byron's open acknowledgement that women have and will continue to shape the poetry he writes, but that he must resist this to an extent in order to avoid becoming a fetish object, 'chain'd so that he cannot move, / And all because a lady fell in love'.⁴²

These female readers were not the sole targets of *Don Juan*, though. Indeed, referring to Cantos I and II, Christensen and Andrew Franta both present compelling readings of the poem, arguing that Byron presents his readers with a prophecy of how they

Hoppner, 31 January 1820' in *Byron's Letters and Journals*, vol. 7, p. 28; *Beppo*, ll. 313–320; and *Don Juan*, Canto IX, l. 571, Canto X, ll. 308–309.

³⁷ Byron, 'To John Murray, 10 October 1819' in *Byron's Letters and Journals*, vol. 6, p. 257; and Harriet Wilson is quoted in Throsby, p. 118.

³⁸ Byron, *Don Juan*, Canto V, l. 927.

³⁹ As he had earlier commented to Thomas Medwin: he wrote *The Corsair*, after all, 'to captivate all the ladies' and, thus, 'was more pleased with the fame [*The*] "*Corsair*" had, than with that of any other of my books. Why? For the very reason because it did shine, and in boudoirs. Who does not write to please the women?' Quoted in Wolfson, *Borderlines*, p. 192.

⁴⁰ The Giaour or Conrad of *The Corsair*, for instance, represent hyper-masculinised characters bordering on the verge of the theatrical. It is these characters that Juan, comedically and unsuccessfully, attempts to emulate. See Byron, *Don Juan*, Canto IX, ll. 358–360.

⁴¹ Haslett, p. 13.

⁴² Indeed, I emphasise, the situation of becoming a fetish object mirrors Byron's repetition of writing the 'trash' Eastern Tales for a demanding audience. *Beppo* and *Don Juan* represent a liberation for the poet, of sorts. See Byron, *Don Juan*, Canto IV, l. 408.

and reviewers would receive *Don Juan*, as well as using Julia as a metaphor for the control his audience had over his works.⁴³ Christensen argues that Julia's parting letter to Juan in Stanzas 192–198 of Canto I, whilst operating under the guise of offering Juan freedom ('I have no further claim on your young heart'), acts as an attempt by Julia to control Juan once he sailed beyond Spain.⁴⁴ While stating that Juan's life will be full of other lovers, Julia not only uses her own feelings to instil guilt in Juan for making her fall for him and losing all she once had ('I loved, I love you, for that love have lost, / State, station, heaven, mankind's, my own esteem'), but she also asks that he 'forgive me, love me' throughout his travels.⁴⁵ Julia's letter thus acts to control Juan's passions in favour of her own agenda, mirroring the implicit control reviewers and audience had and sought over Byron.

Andrew Franta has argued that *Don Juan* 'forecasts' the reactions of its antagonistic readers. For him, Canto II's famous cannibalism scene is designed to prove 'indigestible' to readers who will be 'provoke[d]' to 'toss the book away'.⁴⁶ The cannibalism is only sanctioned by the existence of Julia's letter in the boat though, as it is that document that is used to draw the lots of the crew. The letter thus, according to Franta and Christensen, metaphorically represents the horrible fate that awaited poet, audience and characters were his audience to attempt to exercise too much power over the creative process. I contend, though, that the interaction with his audience is more complex, in part because, more than Franta allows, that audience was itself complex. Franta cites *Blackwood's* aggressive review as evidence of the negative response the poem provoked, but whilst Franta portrays the cannibalism scene of *Don Juan* as an outright rejection of his audience, I would contend that Byron's style of writing and frequent acknowledgements of audience influence extend an olive branch to those readers, whilst simultaneously entertaining less judgmental parts of Byron's audience who read him for fun. Indeed, *Blackwood's* reviewers seemed split upon the poem, often enjoying it, often censoring it, whilst mirroring it in series like the 'Noctes Ambrosianae'.⁴⁷ The cannibalism scene, for instance, like the rest of the poem, is still conveyed in a light and generous tone. At the conclusion of Canto I, for instance, Byron directly addresses his audience and thanks them for their creative input and support:

⁴³ See Christensen, pp. 235–237; and Franta, pp. 49–54.

⁴⁴ Byron, *Don Juan*, Canto I, l. 1531.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, ll. 1537–1538, 1567.

⁴⁶ Franta, p. 54.

⁴⁷ See Cronin, *Paper Pellets*, pp. 39–41, 105–106; and Parker, pp. 81–90, who both argue that *Blackwood's* response to *Don Juan* was as performative as the poem itself.

But for the present, gentle reader! and
 Still gentler purchaser! the bard—that's I—
 Must, with permission, shake you by the hand,
 And so your humble servant, and good bye!
 We meet again, if we should understand
 Each other; and if not, I shall not try
 Your patience further than by this short sample—
 'Twere well if others follow'd my example.⁴⁸

Byron's continuation of the poem (and challenge to audiences), then, is contingent upon their 'patience'. He is their 'humble servant', at the mercy of 'gentle purchaser[s]' which means that his challenge (including his merry 'picture of human suffering', according to *Blackwood's*) can only continue with the blessings of his audience via *Don Juan's* sales.⁴⁹ Thus, Byron does not simply attempt to reject his audience through scenes such as that of cannibalism, so much as play with the contours within his audience to provoke different reactions from each: horror, from the righteous (although he extends sympathy and acknowledges their influence), and amusement from others. He thus takes the stage not to be seen, but to see the reaction it has upon his various audiences.

Mobilité Against Cant

In *Don Juan*, Byron's most satiric challenge towards parts of his audience are aimed squarely at those readers, like his wife or various anonymous fans, who viewed Byron as somehow redeemable and who then actively castigated him around 1816. It is to these readers that Byron reserves his attacks upon 'Cant'. The *Oxford English Dictionary* defines 'cant' as 'hypocritical and sanctimonious talk, typically of a moral, religious, or political nature' or 'language specific to a particular group or profession and regarded with disparagement'.⁵⁰ Writing to Murray in 1821, Byron states 'the truth is

⁴⁸ Byron, *Don Juan*, Canto I, ll. 1761–1768.

⁴⁹ Additionally, as in *Beppo*, Byron's narrator's digressions in *Don Juan* crucially depend upon an intimacy with and the patient receptiveness of his audience.

⁵⁰ *The Oxford English Dictionary*, 3rd Edition, ed. Angus Stevenson, (Oxford; Oxford University Press, 2015), <<http://www.oxfordreference.com/>> [accessed 25/04/19]

that in these days the grand *primum mobile* of England is cant; cant political, cant political, cant religious, cant moral; but always cant, multiplied through all the varieties of life. It is the fashion'.⁵¹ The age, for Byron, was dominated by hypocrisy in all facets of society. Defending the 'flagitious' *Don Juan* from *The British Critic*'s attack, Byron (using the Scott-like pseudonym Wortley Clutterbuck) in his 'Letter To The Editor Of My Grandmother's Review' declared:

You say, no bookseller "was willing to take upon himself the publication, though most of them disgrace themselves by selling it." Now, my dear friend, although we all know that those fellows will do anything for money, methinks the disgrace is more with the purchasers; and some such, doubtless, there are, for there can be no very extensive selling ... without buying.⁵²

For all his readers may condemn Byron, they are complicit in continuing to purchase his books. Much like his conclusion to Canto I stating that his continuation is based upon his poem's reception, Byron continually invites his readers to contemplate the ways in which they are complicit in the creation of his texts, especially *Don Juan* which is written serially.

As in *Beppo*, Byron utilises digression in *Don Juan* in order to obscure the connections between himself and his character that his readers had so faithfully interpreted in his previous works. Mole states that 'people who cant deploy a rhetoric of sincerity that depends on their understanding of the subject as hidden yet legible. They valorise statements and actions which are understood to come from the subject's hidden interior and to gain authority and authenticity from it.'⁵³ In other words, Byron's canting audience believed that his texts and characters were faithful representations of his inner subjectivity, offering up mysteries that can only be understood with knowledge of Byron himself. This is why portions of his audience rejected him in 1816. However, in *Don Juan*, Byron deploys multiple techniques to combat such readings, including the non-development of his character, or selective memory, and the representation of 'bubbles' to more faithfully mirror human nature. Much like *Beppo*, *Don Juan* is a poem of forgetfulness, characterised by critics such as Mole, as an 'anti-bildungsroman', in which

⁵¹ Quoted in Moore, *The Life of Lord Byron*, vol. 6, p. 690.

⁵² Wortley Clutterbuck [Lord Byron], 'A Letter to the Editor of "My Grandmother's Review"' in *The Liberal*, Number 1, (1822), p. 43.

⁵³ Mole, p. 143.

Juan never learns from his previous experiences or indeed seems to remember any event, despite its emotional significance, just a few cantos on from its instance.⁵⁴ This is exemplified by the string of lovers Juan has, and who treat him as plaything or ‘boy’, despite him declaring his undying love for his first, Julia.⁵⁵ With no development or memory, how can Byron’s readers accurately discern Juan’s (and thus Byron’s) legible depths? In *Don Juan*, those depths did not exist.

This holds true for Byron’s unreliable narrator too, with him declaring in Canto I, Stanza 199 that ‘whether / I shall proceed with [Juan’s] adventure is / Dependent on the public altogether’.⁵⁶ Yet, later, the narrator argues that he will continue writing regardless of their opinions:

They accuse me—Me—the present writer of
 The present poem—of—I know not what,—
 A tendency to under-rate and scoff
 At human power and virtue, and all that;
 And this they say in language rather rough.
 Good God! I wonder what they would be at!
 I say no more than has been said in Dante’s
 Verse, and by Solomon and by Cervantes.⁵⁷

Reacting to the varied reception of the previous six cantos, Byron justifies writing on regardless of parts of his audience’s uproar at what they call—inaccurately, he implies—his ‘scoff[ing]’ at ‘human power and virtue’ as simply following other canonical writers like Cervantes. Evidently negative reception played no part in either dissuading Byron’s further publication, or, as with the amusingly off-hand ‘and all that’ which follows the ‘human power and virtue’ he claims not to scoff at, altering exactly that tendency to be casual about those things a ‘canting’ society held most especially dear. Byron’s narrator acknowledges this inconstancy by admitting that he writes ‘never know[ing] the word which will come next’ even though he believes ‘men should know

⁵⁴ Ibid., p. 138.

⁵⁵ Juan declared his undying love for Julia, although Byron later writes: ‘But Juan! had he quite forgotten Julia? / And should he have forgotten her so soon? / I can’t but say it seems to me a / Most perplexing question’ See Byron, *Don Juan*, Canto II, ll. 1657–1660.

⁵⁶ Ibid., Canto I, ll. 1585–1587.

⁵⁷ Ibid., Canto VII, ll. 17–24.

why / They write,' labelling himself as 'Changeable too—yet somehow 'Idem semper'.⁵⁸ No audience can accurately pinpoint Byron's legible interior, when, whether it happens across the various instalments of the poem or whether it happens within a single line, the poem seems constantly and eagerly contradictory.

In the face of his canting audience, though, Byron deploys an alternate theory of human nature that better suits himself: 'mobilité'. In a textual footnote to *Don Juan*, Canto XVI, Stanza 97, Byron explains 'French "mobilité" [...] It may be defined as an excessive susceptibility of immediate impressions—at the same time without *losing* the past; and is, though sometimes apparently useful to the possessor, a most painful and unhappy attribute'.⁵⁹ Lady Blessington recalled that the 'mobility of [Byron's] nature is extraordinary, and makes him inconsistent in his actions as well as in his conversation' and that 'Byron is a perfect chameleon, taking the colour of whatever touches him. He is conscious of this, and says it is going to the extreme mobilité of his nature, which yields to present impressions'. Indeed, she was so 'perplexed' with the 'mass of heterogeneous evidence' that she found it almost impossible to form a 'just conclusion' of him.⁶⁰

Such 'excessive susceptibility of immediate impressions' is evident in Juan's and his narrator's forgetful whims. This idea is best laid out in Byron's deployment of 'bubbles' to evoke chance, uncertainty, and immediate impressions as a determining factor towards his poetry and viewpoints. Daniel Gabelman identifies Byron's use of butterflies and bubbles in *Don Juan* as an attempt to play and experiment in the face of boredom.⁶¹ I posit that, by taking into account Byron's distaste for cant, he uses bubbles as an attempt to outline alternate views to his audience's rigid reading patterns. Byron evokes bubbles in order to suggest that his views are formed by his immediate environment and feelings, as much as chance or uncertainty, much like the movement of bubbles in the breeze. Indeed, in Canto XIV, Byron states:

You know, or don't know, what great Bacon saith,
 'Fling up a straw, 'twill show the way the wind blows';
And such a straw, borne on by human breath,

⁵⁸ Ibid., Canto IX, ll. 328, 326–327, Canto XVII, l. 83.

⁵⁹ Byron, *Lord Byron, The Complete Works*, vol. 5, p. 769, n.820.

⁶⁰ Quoted in Wolfson, *Borderlines*, p. 179.

⁶¹ See Daniel Gabelman, 'Bubbles, Butterflies, and Bores: Play and Boredom in *Don Juan*' in *The Byron Journal*, Vol. 38, Issue 2, (2010), pp. 145–156.

Is Poesy, according as the mind glows;
A paper kite, which flies 'twixt life and death,
A shadow which the onward Soul behind throws:
And mine's a bubble not blown up for praise,
But just to play with, as an infant plays.⁶²

The implication is that his thoughts, expressed in poetry, are subject to constant change, and that such change is often motivated merely, like a child with a bubble in the wind, by the joy and variety of playing.⁶³

In response to parts of his audience, then, who denounced Byron around 1816 via their reading patterns (identifying his sin through his mysterious characters) and who imposed upon him their own perceived identity as in need of redemption (like his wife), the poet accuses them of cant by reading his very works and by not acknowledging that either his characters may not represent his hidden subjectivity, or that man can change. In order to seize control of his public identity and break free of the reading patterns he and Murray had designed and subsequently lost control of, in *Don Juan*, Byron constructs an alternative image of himself and his characters that relies on 'mobilité'. In a poem of, as Anne Mellor describes it, 'abundant chaos; [where] everything moves, changes its shape, becomes something different', his audience find it impossible to discern Byron's definitive legible depths, something their canting readings rely upon.⁶⁴ *Don Juan's* deployment of 'mobilité' thus stands as Byron's attempts to alter Romantic literary culture, values, and reading patterns (of which he and Murray were architects) in the face of an audience who had co-opted Byron's identity in alignment with their own moralistic sentiments. With the increasingly obvious presence in this later period of a 'canting' or Evangelical audience, Byron's interactions with his audience became a little more testy. Yet neither party rejected the other. The cantos sold well, and readers still read him (even if some of those readers seemed at times to read him only to become outraged). *Don Juan*, exactly in its instability, remained the product of a complexly defined set of interactions with an audience that Byron (and his publishers) found fascinatingly hard to pin down, an experience that found its reflection in a diverse group of

⁶² Byron, *Don Juan*, Canto XIV, ll. 57–64.

⁶³ This echoes his statement to his wife, touched upon earlier, when he stated 'the great object of life is Sensation—to feel that we exist—even though in pain'. See Byron, 'To Annabella Milbanke, 6 September, 1813' in *Byron's Letters and Journals*, vol. 3, p. 109.

⁶⁴ Anne Mellor, *English Romantic Irony*, (Cambridge, MA; Harvard University Press, 1980), p. 42.

readers who read this ‘ever-varying’ poem in ever-varying ways. Encompassing his own poem succinctly as mirroring more realistically life itself than ‘cant’, *Don Juan*’s narrator comments ‘such my present tale is, / A non-descript and ever varying rhyme, / A versified Aurora Borealis.’⁶⁵

The Break Up Of Byron And Murray

Upon receiving Byron’s manuscripts of *Don Juan* in 1818, Murray replied enthusiastically, labelling it ‘exceedingly good—& the power with which you alternately make ones blood thrill & our Sides Shake is very great’ and that ‘It probably surpasses in talent anything that you ever wrote’.⁶⁶ Just four years later, Byron and Murray’s partnership lay asunder. However, contrary to most scholarly accounts, Byron did not leave Murray due to his publisher’s squeamishness or political unease over *Don Juan*. Instead, multiple factors contributed to their parting. Chief amongst these was the pair’s diverging intentions for the poem governed by Murray’s role as publisher and Byron’s new intent to experiment with the audience their success was built upon. Additionally, following O’Connell’s analysis, I shall take into account that the pair separated due to Murray’s problematic marketing strategy for *Don Juan*, and at the encouragement of Byron’s friends.

Writing to Byron on *Don Juan*’s first cantos, Hobhouse communicated that he and Scrope Davies, both reading the poem simultaneously, agreed that Byron ‘perhaps had found your real forte in this singular style’. However, ‘[Hobhouse and Davies]’ objections were, you may easily imagine, drawn from the sarcasms against the Lady of Seaham—the licentiousness and in some cases downright indecency of many stanzas and of the whole turn of the poem— from the flings at religion—and from the slashing right and left at other worthy writers of the day’ and the ‘rakish air of the half real hero’. Consequently, they concluded that ‘*it will be impossible to publish this*’, recommending

⁶⁵ Indeed, in a letter to Douglas Kinnaid, justifying *Don Juan*’s erratic style, Byron demanded of him: ‘As to “Don Juan”—confess—confess—you dog—and be candid—that it is the sublime of *that there* sort of writing—it may be bawdy—but is it not good English?—it may be profligate—but is it not *life*, is it not *the thing*?—Could any man have written it—who has not lived in the world?’ See Byron, ‘To Douglas Kinnaid, 26 October 1818’ in *Byron’s Letters and Journals*, vol. 6, p. 232; and Byron, *Don Juan*, Canto VII, ll. 9–11.

⁶⁶ Of course, this excitement is also tempered by Murray’s warnings that certain sections ‘may [need] modify[ing] or substitut[ing]’ such as ‘the verse in the Shipwreck’, ‘Master Mates disease’, and ‘the suppression of Urine’. See Murray, ‘28 May 1819’ in *The Letters Of John Murray To Lord Byron*, p. 273.

‘total suppression’, stating that Murray ‘will publish’ but ‘has, on my representation, the same sentiments as myself’.⁶⁷ This stands in contrast to Murray’s effusions over the poem and his encouragement of Byron by sending contemporary literature ‘on purpose’ to ‘provoke’ Byron’s ‘contempt’ and provide him with material ‘for a new Baviad w[hi]ch we very much need to flap away a nest of pretenders’.⁶⁸ Indeed, Murray’s selection of a quarto format and fine paper, along with encouragement like ‘I have read it Six times and always discover some new excellence’ and ‘you never did anything greater’, display his confidence that *Don Juan* was to be Byron’s masterpiece.⁶⁹ In his response to Hobhouse and Kinnaid, Byron defended the poem vigorously, arguing ‘I will have “no cutting & slashing”’, ‘*Don Juan* shall be an entire horse or none’ and ‘in no case will I submit to have the poem mutilated’, reminding Hobhouse that he had been ‘cloyed with applause & sickened with abuse’ and that he would not yield ‘as long as I have a tester or testicle remaining’.⁷⁰

⁶⁷ Indeed, considering Byron’s various audiences and the way they historically read his poems (perhaps reading it that way themselves), Hobhouse and Davies concluded that: ‘if you are mixed up, as you inevitably will be, with the character or the adventures or the turn of thinking and acting recommended by the poem, it is certain that not only you will gain no credit by the present reference, but will loose some portion of the fame attached to the supposed former delineation of your own sublime & pathetic feelings—If the world shall imagine that taking advantage of your great command of all readers you are resolved to make them admire a style intolerable in less powerful writers, you will find in a short time that a rebellion will be excited, and with some pretext, against your supremacy: and though you may recover yourself it will be only with another effort in your original manner—I need only remind you that you used to pride yourself and with great reason upon your delicacy—now it will be impossible for any lady to allow *Don Juan* to be seen on her table, and you would not wish to be crammed like “the man of feeling” into her pocket’. He also warned that ‘all the idle stories about your Venetian life will be more than confirmed, they will be exaggerated’ and that the ‘parody on the commandments though one of the best things in the poem or indeed in all that sort of poetry is surely inadmissible’ and that whilst ‘the attack on Castlereagh was much better than that on Southey’ he should not publish them unless Byron were ‘over here ready to fight him’. Evidently Hobhouse and Davies’s objections were formed on their understandings of his audiences, audiences which Murray also identified and that, as I shall demonstrate, Byron newly sought to offend. See John Cam Hobhouse, *Byron’s Bulldog: The Letters of John Cam Hobhouse to Lord Byron*, ed. Peter Graham, (Columbus, OH; Ohio State University Press, 1984), pp. 256–60.

⁶⁸ Murray, ‘27 October 1820’ in *The Letters of John Murray To Lord Byron*, p. 354.

⁶⁹ Byron gave very little credence to Murray’s attempts at flattery in his attempts persuade the poet to a more favourable course, with one exchange resulting in Byron declaring ‘time seems to be past when (as Dr Johnson said) a man was certain to “hear the truth from his bookseller”, for you have paid me so many compliments, that, if I was not the veriest scribbler on Earth, I should feel affronted’ and that whilst ‘I accept your compliments, it is but fair I should give equal or greater credit to your objections’. See Byron, ‘To John Murray, 5 September 1811’ in *Byron’s Letters and Journals*, vol. 2, p. 90; and Murray, ‘23 July 1819’ in *The Letters Of John Murray To Lord Byron*, p. 281.

⁷⁰ The statement echoes his responses to Kinnaid when he declared that he will ‘not be deterred by any outcry—they hate me—and I detest them’ and that ‘they shall not interrupt the march of my mind’. See Byron, ‘To Douglas Kinnaid, 2 May 1822’ in *Byron’s Letters and Journals*, vol. 9, p. 152; and ‘To Hobhouse And Kinnaid, 19 January 1819’ in *Ibid.*, vol. 6, pp. 91–92.

Byron's response to Hobhouse demonstrates the divergence between poet and publisher, and the interference of Byron's friends who had consistently disliked Murray.⁷¹ With challenges to the public such as those demonstrated already, Murray, with his eye to the 'orthodox', requested changes to the first two cantos to which Byron replied 'You are right—Gifford is right—Crabbe is right—Hobhouse is right—you are all right—and I am all wrong—but do pray let me have that pleasure'.⁷² With an increasingly reactionary government exercising against seditious texts, Murray's caution was excusable, despite Byron believing him 'somewhat of the opinion of every body you talk with (particularly the last person you see)'.⁷³ The compromise was that the poem was published anonymously, with no publisher's name, and minus its inflammatory preface.

These compromises, which O'Connell demonstrates were part of Murray's marketing, proved unsound.⁷⁴ Playing upon the appearance of a comet over Europe, Murray attached the poem's advertisements to it, printing it without either author's or publisher's names as a ploy to increase public intrigue.⁷⁵ This strategy backfired, with Byron stating bluntly that he did 'not approve of your mode of not putting publisher's

⁷¹ O'Connell and Graham demonstrate that none of Byron's close friends were particularly fond of Murray, especially the mercantile relationship the poet had with his publisher, with Kinnaird labelling the publisher 'Merchant Murray', warning Byron that 'this Scotchman considers you his property'. Indeed, '[a]fter Byron's death, Moore and Hobhouse were reluctant to allow Murray's name on a committee to organise a monument for the poet. The reasoning for this was because Murray "is, after all, but a tradesman, he has hardly a right to be there". See O'Connell, *A Poet and His Publisher*, p. 15; "[T]he Natural Antipathy of Author and Bookseller", p. 169; and Graham, 'Byron And the Politics Of Editing', p. 48.

⁷² Indeed, in the previous letter sent to Murray than this one, Byron even goes so far as to label Murray a 'chicken hearted—silver-paper Stationer' demanding that 'I hear nothing further from you' on *Don Juan*. Evidently Murray and Byron's friends ground down his resistance, although not to the extent that he altered the poem for them. See Byron, 'To John Murray, 9 August 1819' and 'To John Murray, 12 August 1819' in *Byron's Letters and Journals*, vol. 6, pp. 205, 206–207.

⁷³ Government suppression remained high due to the unrest in the country and is best represented by the case of Southey's *Wat Tyler* (1817) only two years before *Don Juan*'s publication. This was where Southey's suppressed poem was published to official parliamentary condemnation, forcing the poet to distance himself from his earlier work. Additionally, O'Connell demonstrates that one pressure on Murray was that his solicitor, Sharon Turner, urged the publisher to suppress the poem out of fear of a government response. See O'Connell, *A Poet and His Publisher*, p. 183; and, in this letter, Byron appears outraged at Murray for not being proud of his 'Stepmother[ing]' of *Don Juan* and of publishing it with his printing house's imprint. See Byron, 'To John Murray, 3 November 1821' in *Byron's Letters and Journals*, vol. 9, p. 54.

⁷⁴ See O'Connell, *A Poet and His Publisher*, pp. 180–181.

⁷⁵ See Ibid.

names on title pages—(which was unheard of—till *you* gave yourself that *air*)—an author’s case is different—and from time immemorial have published anonymously’.⁷⁶ As O’Connell highlights, *The British Critic* seized on the lack of Murray’s name, stating that ‘A thousand low and portentous murmurs proceeded his birth’ and that this ‘book without a bookseller: an advertisement without an advertiser—a “deed without a name”’ had successful ‘paralysed’ ‘Paternoster-row’ before ‘After all this portentous parturition, out creeps DON JUAN’.⁷⁷ Coupled to the provocative subject of *Don Juan*, readers anticipated a controversial poem which would potentially damage the reputation of both poet and avowed readers alike.⁷⁸ Additionally, Murray’s long utilised tactic of high pricing alongside no publisher’s trademark, meant the poem became the most widely pirated poem of the era.⁷⁹ Kinnaird immediately blamed Murray’s ‘extraordinary & unlooked for experiment[ation]’ and stated that ‘the quarto edition has disgusted people, & announced a pretension it never meant to put forth’.⁸⁰

In response to *Don Juan*’s initially solid if—for Byron—disappointing sales, Murray requested increased editorial intervention in the poem, claiming that he was not ‘squeamish—but the character of the Middling-Classes of the country—is certainly highly moral—and we should not offend them’.⁸¹ The request misinterpreted Byron’s

⁷⁶ As the statement suggests, Byron justified his own reluctance to be named in *English Bards* and *Don Juan* based on tradition, but Murray, according to the poet, must face the fire of what *Don Juan* wreaks. There is perhaps a lack of awareness on Byron’s part, here, of the nature of their joint venture with such a scandalous text meaning the backlash was also to be shared. Murray seems well aware of this. See Byron, ‘To John Murray, 4 October 1821’ in *Byron’s Letters and Journals*, vol. 8, p. 232.

⁷⁷ See O’Connell, *A Poet and His Publisher*, p. 181; and ‘Review of *Don Juan*, I–II’ in *The British Critic*, 2nd Series, Vol. XII, (August 1819), p. 196, cited in *The Romantics Reviewed*, part B, vol. 1, p. 296.

⁷⁸ *The Examiner*, on November 10th, 1822, summed up the conundrum of *Don Juan*’s reception perfectly in that it was simultaneously condemned, but also the most read poem of the age, when it stated that ‘[n]o work of modern days has been so cried out against as immoral and indecent as *Don Juan*, and you see a consequence:—the critics, one and all, shake their heads at it; grave old gentlemen turn up their eyes and sigh in lamentation over the depravity of the age; all ladies of character blush at its very mention; no writer has yet been found hardy enough to hint a word in defence or palliation,— yet, nonsense to relate, every body reads it!’ Quoted in Ben Wilson, p. 337.

⁷⁹ Indeed, *The Quarterly Review* later mocked Murray for this, highlighting that if not for these tactics, *Don Juan* ‘in quarto and on hot-pressed paper would have been almost innocent—in a whity-brown duodecimo [of the pirates] it was one of the worst of the most dubious publications that have made the press a snare’. For discussion of this, see O’Connell, *A Poet and His Publisher*, p. 197.

⁸⁰ Quoted in *Ibid.*, p. 181.

⁸¹ St Clair estimates 5,100 official copies of Cantos I and II of *Don Juan* were sold immediately after release, compared to *The Corsair*’s 10,000 on the day of its release. Whilst these figures

new aims, though.⁸² As the ‘Middling-Classes’ of Britain had abandoned him in 1816, Byron now intended to provoke them. In response to his request, Byron labelled Murray afraid ‘*to have any opinion at all*—till he knows what the Public think’, pronouncing that he would continue *Don Juan* ‘though it were to destroy fame and profit at once’.⁸³ The situation was unsustainable. Byron knew well enough that Murray’s method was ‘nothing but a perpetual speculation on what will or will not succeed’ amongst public reception, even if that meant their partnership was becoming ‘in its very nature a *hostile* transaction’.⁸⁴ With his new aim of directly challenging his ‘orthodox’ audience, an audience that Murray still sought to market Byron to, the poet and the publisher’s relationship could not continue. Despite Murray offering ‘a Thousand Guineas for each canto until [his] plan is sublimely completed’, in 1823 Byron replied to Murray’s objections to Canto V: ‘I shall withdraw you as a publisher—on every account even on your own—and I wish you good luck elsewhere’.⁸⁵

Whilst the breakup does not seem mutual, Murray’s later warnings to Byron suggest that the poet’s goals could not have been countenanced much longer. On cantos published by Hunt, Murray told Byron:

I declare to you, these were so outrageously shocking that I would not publish them if you would give me your estate—Title—& Genius—For heavens [sic] sake revise them, they are equal in talent to anything you have written, & it is

were astonishing when compared to most of other Byron’s contemporaries, they were underwhelming in his literary corpus. See St Clair, *Reading Nation*, p. 327; and Murray, ‘14 November 1819’ in *The Letters Of John Murray To Lord Byron*, p. 297.

⁸² As I have touched on in the previous chapter, Byron, at this point, regretted writing the ‘exaggerated nonsense which has corrupted the public taste’ that Murray had encouraged with the *Eastern Tales*. These were explicitly and directly written to appeal to the middling classes’ or ‘orthodox’ audience Murray aimed for. See Byron, ‘To Percy Bysshe Shelley, 20 May 1822’ in *Byron’s Letters and Journals*, vol. 9, p. 161.

⁸³ Byron, ‘To John Cam Hobhouse, 17 May 1819’ in *Byron’s Letters and Journals*, vol. 6, p. 131; and ‘To John Cam Hobhouse, 19 March 1823’, in *Ibid.*, vol. 10, p. 126.

⁸⁴ Byron, ‘To Douglas Kinnaird, 4 July 1821’ in *Ibid.*, vol. 8, p. 153

⁸⁵ It is clear from Byron’s letter to Murray on Canto V withdrawing him as publisher that Byron regretted that the situation had come to this. He displays sorrow on having to split the partnership which had built his own and Murray’s success over the years. Such sorrow stands as evidence that the pair were not just business partners but also valued friends. However, it is also evidence of Byron’s determination to see *Don Juan*’s project of play and experimentation with, as well as challenge to, a varied audience through to the end, despite the personal and professional costs to himself. See Murray, ‘14 November 1819’ in *The Letters Of John Murray To Lord Byron*, p. 298; and Byron, ‘To John Murray, 18 November 1822’ in *Byron’s Letters and Journals*, vol. 10, p. 36.

therefore well worth while to extract what would shock the feeling of every man in the Country—& do your name everlasting injury.

My Company used to be courted for the pleasure of talking about you—it is totally the reverse now—&, by a re-action, <y> even your former works are considerably deteriorated in Sale—It is not possible for you to have a more purely attached friend than I am, my name is connected with your fame—and I beseech you to take care of it.⁸⁶

Respectfully, Murray suggests that even he had a breaking point and that the cantos following V represented that. The audience Murray sought to market Byron to could not countenance them, meaning the publisher could not either. Under Hunt's imprint, *Don Juan* sold far better than before, in part because Hunt sold each canto at as little as a shilling.⁸⁷ But that was exactly Murray's problem. Byron was being snobbish about Murray's position as a 'tradesman' when he asked Moore to 'nail Murray ... to his own counter', but Murray had his own class pretensions, and those required addressing his publications only to the right kind of audience. Byron was not willing to be restrictive in this sense: he wrote his 'ever-varying' poem for every kind of reader. The relationship with Hunt had none of the amicability of Byron's relationship with Murray, but it allowed Byron to create a text that engaged with a new, diverse, audience.⁸⁸

Evidently then, with their differing roles and designs for *Don Juan*, both Murray and Byron found that their respective publishing interests would be better served apart. Due to Byron's desire to challenge parts of his audience, Murray's eye to the orthodox was no longer desirable, indeed even becoming something to be resisted in Byron's composition. Audience influence, through the prism of Murray, thus became a creative influence on *Don Juan* through play, coercion, experimentation, and occasional attack. As O'Connell's analysis of Murray's marketing of *Don Juan* and Byron's correspondence show, numerous factors contributed to the downfall of Murray and Byron's relationship. However, chief amongst these were the directly oppositional aims the pair respectively had for the poem. The bonds between Byron, his audiences, and his publisher were simply pushed to breaking point.

⁸⁶ Murray, '29 October 1822' in *The Letters Of John Murray To Lord Byron*, pp. 455–456.

⁸⁷ See St Clair, *Reading Nation*, p. 327.

⁸⁸ Andrew Elfenbein also argues that due to Byron's exile in Italy in this period and the slow process of communication between the pair (especially since Byron seemed a particularly needy correspondent), their professional relationship was inevitably doomed. See Andrew Elfenbein, 'How to Analyze a Correspondence: The Example of Byron and Murray' in *European Romantic Review*, Vol. 22, Issue 3, (2011), pp. 347–355.

An Eye To Posterity

Part of the reason Murray's handling of Byron failed was that assurances of appeasing his contemporary British audience would guarantee him fame in posterity no longer seemed to convince the poet. Large swathes of that audience, after all, had driven Byron into exile. In response, *Don Juan* became, as Andrew Bennett describes it, one of 'the most radical critiques of the culture of posterity from the Romantic period'.⁸⁹ In his critique of the 'culture of posterity', Byron inevitably came into contact with the author who wrote most prolifically about it: Wordsworth. Similarly to Bennett, I shall contend that *Don Juan* represents Byron's attempt to mock and counter the Wordsworthian 'culture of posterity', whilst simultaneously 'celebrating its possibility, albeit ambivalently, for himself'.⁹⁰ As Cronin argues on the opposition between 'high' and 'low' cultures in the late Romantic period, 'rejection was in closer relation to recognition than might have been realised', and this was true of Byron's investigation of new ideas of posterity.⁹¹ I shall argue, drawing on ideas of 'anticipation' of futurity by Emily Rohrbach, that Byron presents an alternative to Wordsworth's ideology whereby no one can write definitively for an audience in posterity, but rather, like the fluctuating world of *Don Juan*, Byron does not know whether he will live on literarily.⁹² He can only celebrate the multiple possibilities, and speculate that mass dissemination is more likely to assure him of literary immortality. As Byron was actively challenging the British audience who had exiled him in the poem, I shall utilise Byron's enthusiasm at his reception in the United States of America as an example of his beliefs in mass-dissemination.

Upon writing *Childe Harold, Canto III*, Byron recalled that in a period of sickness Percy Shelley 'used to dose me with Wordsworth even to nausea; and I do remember then reading some things of his with pleasure', including *The Excursion* (1814).⁹³ This manifested itself with a brief consideration by Byron of Wordsworthian notions in

⁸⁹ Bennett, *Culture of Posterity*, p. 194.

⁹⁰ Ibid., p. 198.

⁹¹ Cronin, *Paper Pellets*, p. 17.

⁹² See Rohrbach, pp. 134–158.

⁹³ Quoted in Peter Cochran, 'Byron and Shelley: Radical Incompatibles' in *Romanticism On The Net*, Number 43, (August 2006) <<https://www.erudit.org/en/journals/ron/>> [accessed 08/03/19].

Childe Harold, Canto III.⁹⁴ By *Don Juan*, though, this flirtation had ended. In his 'Essay Supplementary To The Preface' (1815), Wordsworth suggests that no great poet ever achieved immediate fame and that 'numerous publications have blazed into popularity, and passed away, leaving scarcely a trace behind them'.⁹⁵ He believed that by rejecting a contemporary audience, instead writing poetry for one deferred and thus untainted by contemporary literary culture, he could ensure poetic immortality. Byron, having briefly considered alternative relationships to his audience upon being 'dosed' by Shelley following his disillusion with his contemporary British audience, and likely taking into account his experience and productive engagement with the Romantic marketplace and audience, came to feel otherwise. He declared 'the very existence of a poet previous to the invention of printing depended upon his present popularity'.⁹⁶ The statement is importantly qualified. Whilst mass popularity makes it more likely that poets could achieve fame in posterity, 'printing' has perhaps allowed another way to achieve it: Wordsworth's way. In response to an attack, Byron penned 'Some Observations Upon An Article In Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine' (1821) which does not so much reply to the magazine as castigate Wordsworth, Southey, and Coleridge.⁹⁷ Franta highlights that in his response, for Byron, the astonishing point about Wordsworth is that he has found a large audience for his opinions ('Men of the most opposite opinions have united upon this topic') despite the fact that his poetry 'is not quite so much read by his contemporaries as might be desirable'.⁹⁸ In effect, Wordsworth appeared to have assembled a constituency for his views on poetry which outstripped the readership of his actual poems. Wordsworthian ideas of posterity had become a significant part of public discourse, and that had important consequences for Byron.

Byron's point, then, is that despite not having a vast audience (like himself), Wordsworth seems to have garnered a legislative power over canonicity simply by publishing his statements, outlining that contemporary acclaim is not necessary to be appreciated in posterity, and that these views may come to look representative of the reading public's views, thus condemning Byron to a minor place in history. In response, Byron

⁹⁴ As many critics have shown, despite his antipathy to Wordsworth, Byron was deeply influenced by him, notably in *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*, Canto III; see Alan Rawes, '1816-17: Childe Harold III And Manfred' in *The Cambridge Companion to Byron*, p. 118.

⁹⁵ See Wordsworth, 'Essay Supplementary To The Preface', p. 66-67.

⁹⁶ Quoted in O'Connell, *A Poet and His Publisher*, pp. 117-118.

⁹⁷ 'Some Observations Upon An Article In Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine' was not published in Byron's lifetime, however.

⁹⁸ Franta, p. 41.

bluntly stated '[Wordsworth] may have a sect, but he will never have a public, and his "audience" will always be "few" without being "fit"'.⁹⁹

It is in *Don Juan* where Byron truly grapples with the differences between himself and Wordsworth. As Rohrbach states, '*Don Juan* presents a world in which inclinations to anticipate the future lead not to knowledge or a single visionary path into the future (or even a knowledge of the present); anticipations of an uncertain futurity produce, rather, a rich multiplicity of present possibilities'.¹⁰⁰ Just as Juan and his narrator do not develop or learn from their past, the poem itself resists the natural impulse to use the present as part of the foundations for the future.¹⁰¹ Indeed, in Canto XIV, Byron celebrates such uncertainty:

If, from Great Nature's or our own Abyss
Of Thought, we could but snatch a Certainty,
Perhaps Mankind might find the path they miss;
But then 'twould spoil much good philosophy—
One System eats another up—and this
Much as old Saturn ate his progeny—
For when his pious Consort gave him Stones
In lieu of Sons, of these he made no bones.¹⁰²

If certainty were assured, mankind would 'find the path they miss; / But then 'twould spoil much good philosophy'. If mankind knew the path to literary immortality, as Wordsworth professes to, then all would follow that path, but this would be at the cost of play, experimentation, and chance, something *Don Juan* celebrates.

It is perhaps in Wordsworth's declaration of himself as an arbiter of future taste, damning Byron to 'fade away', that the poet takes most issue with, in part due to his experience of an audience determining his identity through interpretation. In Canto XII, Byron asks:

Why, I'm Posterity—and so are you;

⁹⁹ Quoted in Franta, p. 43.

¹⁰⁰ Rohrbach, p. 134.

¹⁰¹ One example of this that I have already discussed is when Byron's narrator assures his audience that the poem's continuation was dependent upon reception, but then engaged with negative reception to his earlier cantos as part of his continued composition regardless.

¹⁰² See Byron, *Don Juan*, Canto XIV, ll. 1–8.

And whom do we remember? Not a hundred.
 Were every memory written down all true,
 The tenth or twentieth name would be but blundered:
 Even Plutarch's lives have but picked out a few,
 And 'gainst those few our annalists have thundered;
 And Mitford in the nineteenth century
 Gives, with Greek truth, the good old Greek the lie.¹⁰³

Inevitably authors will write, but the real arbiters of future taste are audiences, both present and deferred. Poetry, then, is only remembered by an audience who select it from many, often interpreting it their own way (even 'blundering'), meaning that a poet is only remembered through the prism of that deferred audience. Poets themselves cannot possibly dictate if, or indeed how, they are remembered: only that future audience can. One can write according to the taste of the day, but as Byron had experienced a period of upheaval in taste (through the huge changes in audience composition of the Romantic period), he acknowledges 'That taste [may be] gone, [as] fame is but a lottery, / Drawn by the blue-coat misses of a coterie'.¹⁰⁴ The reference to female readers here, highlights the tumultuous changes in taste that cannot be accounted for by a contemporary writer predicting the future. As Rohrbach suggests, the Romantic period taught Byron that the old certainties about 'taste' being defined in consistent ways by a discerning, male elite—ideas he had inherited from forebears like Pope—could no longer be counted on, in part because of the new dominance of 'blue-coat misses'. Hence, Byron's works may indeed be celebrated immortally, or 'these lines [might] only line portmanteaus'.¹⁰⁵ The uncertainty is not one that he condemns, but rather one that he folds into the texture of his poem.

Whilst *Don Juan*, then, celebrates the possibility that his poetry may (or may not) be remembered, it is in Byron's interactions with foreign readers that we find his best hopes for why he might. In his journal, Byron recorded his reaction to hearing that he was popular in the U.S.A.:

These are the first tidings that have ever sounded like *Fame* to my ears—to be redde on the banks of the Ohio! ... To be popular in a rising and far country has

¹⁰³ Ibid., Canto XII, ll. 145–152.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., Canto IV, ll. 871–872.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., Canto XIV, l. 111.

a kind of *posthumous feel*, very different from the ephemeral *éclat* and *fete-ing*, buzzing, and party-ing compliments of the well dressed multitude.¹⁰⁶

Recalling Byron's visit to the American *U.S.S. Constitution* and *Ontario*, George Ticknow wrote that, upon presenting the poet with an American pirated edition of his poetry, he 'expressed satisfaction at seeing [his work] in a small form because in that way, he said, nobody would be prevented from purchasing it'.¹⁰⁷ These comments pick up on two crucial indications Byron seems to associate with fame in posterity: that he was internationally read, and that his books were readily available to an audience of vast, varied composition.

On Byron's visit to the warships, Noah Comet suggests that, 'Byron felt little allegiance to England since the separation affair of 1816; in his letters he makes this point repeatedly with bitterness and humour. The *Constitution* provided him with an irresistible literal platform upon which to express indeed a frustration toward his homeland that he had expressed many times in word.'¹⁰⁸ Having been exiled by swathes of his contemporary British audience, then, Byron thrilled in the fact that he had an international audience to whom he could turn. His satisfaction at the cheap American pirated edition of his works, alongside his assertion that he would prefer the commendations of 'an American' than an 'Emperor', highlight that Byron appreciated being read by a vast audience varied in their class. Continuously throughout his dealings with Murray, Byron had complained of the restrictive prices of his texts that Murray used to determine Byron's aristocratic audience.¹⁰⁹ Pirates allowed the working classes cheap access to Byron. His new publisher, Hunt, had obliged Byron by printing and selling the later cantos of *Don Juan* cheaply.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁶ Similarly to this, in a letter to Moore, about his visit to the American *U.S.S. Constitution* and *Ontario*, Byron celebrated his fame in the United States by declaring: 'All of these American honours arise, perhaps not so much from their enthusiasm for my "Poeshie," as their belief in my dislike to the English,—in which I have the satisfaction to coincide with them. I would rather, however, have a nod from an American, than a snuff-box from an Emperor.' See Byron, 'To Thomas Moore, 8 June 1822' in *Byron's Letters and Journals*, vol. 9, p. 171; and 'Journal, Sunday, 5 December 1813' in *Ibid.*, vol. 3, pp. 229–230.

¹⁰⁷ Quoted in Dino Franco Felluga, *The Perversity of Poetry: Romantic Ideology and the Popular Male Poet of Genius*, (New York, NY; State University Of New York Press, 2005), p. 90.

¹⁰⁸ Noah Comet, 'Byron's Day in America: The U.S. Squadron and His Lordship's Legacy' in *The Byron Journal*, Vol. 45, Number 1, (2017), pp. 55–66 (p. 58).

¹⁰⁹ Bear in mind that this was primarily the audience that had consumed Byron's works, then contributed to his social exile too.

¹¹⁰ Whilst Hunt's cantos of *Don Juan* were far cheaper than Murray's, thus opening up the poem to a wider cross section of Britain's readers, a shilling was nonetheless above the wages of the working class but just low enough to counter piracies.

Therefore, coupled to the role of chance in *Don Juan*, Byron proposes, contrary to Wordsworth, that his fame in posterity is in no way assured; its chances are higher, though, due to his far larger and more varied audience. Byron, from his experience with his contemporary audience, thus acknowledges that an audience will continue to play a determining role in the meaning of his work, whether that audience is now or in the future. As *Don Juan* states:

But words are things, and a small drop of ink,
Falling like dew, upon a thought, produces
That which makes thousands, perhaps millions, think;
'Tis strange, the shortest letter which man uses
Instead of speech, may form a lasting link
Of ages¹¹¹

His 'drop of ink' provides a 'lasting link' to a deferred audience, although it is that audience's 'think[ing]' which determines the meaning of his words. Evidently, against Wordsworth's ideal of 'creating the taste by which he is to be enjoyed', Byron suggests that, by embracing chance, an audience in posterity becomes more, not less, possible as it is they and their 'think[ing]' that determines if and how he is remembered.¹¹² Delighted with his audience abroad, coupled with his beliefs in the 'lottery' of posterity, Byron thus sculpts *Don Juan* in a way that directly challenges and experiments with his traditional British audience as well as the Wordsworthian notions of posterity that he had toyed with around 1816, knowing that he cannot truly dictate the terms of his remembrance anyway. Byron learned from his contemporaries, and made their critical interventions a creative part of his work. Wordsworthian 'posterity' is something he toys with throughout *Don Juan*, and through his interaction with it (and critique of it) he suggests just how radically uncertain any 'text' (any 'small drop of ink') actually is when its meaning is created by so many diverse and unstable participants.

Conclusion

Due to his experience of 1816 and the varied interpretations of himself and his texts in his fan-mail, Byron altered the relationship between himself and audience radically with

¹¹¹ Byron, *Don Juan*, Canto III, ll. 793–798.

¹¹² Wordsworth, 'Essay Supplementary To The Preface', p. 80.

Beppo and *Don Juan*. He had realised that once his texts reached his audience, it was impossible to control their readings. Consequently, rather than attempting to guide his increasingly anxious, moralistic audience's readings, as he had attempted in the final cantos of *Childe Harold*, Byron altered this relationship to one of experimentation and play. His audiences' various 'interpretative tendencies and ideological contours' acted as a creative impetus in which he could interact with various types of readers simultaneously, for different purposes. Experimentation with these divided audiences ultimately became the compositional impetus behind *Beppo* and *Don Juan*.

However, as I have shown, Byron and Murray produced poetry through negotiation between one another and their conceptions of audiences. Byron's altered intentions towards the 'orthodox' audience that had built the pair's success proved problematic when Murray still wished to appeal to them. Evidently the poet was more comfortable provoking them and inviting other audiences into his creative considerations than Murray. Murray had not learnt that audience cannot be controlled. Ultimately, then, the bonds between publisher and poet became too unstable, in part because the bond they were aiming to form with an audience became itself a source of uncertainty. Murray's role as a prism through which Byron understood his fame and negotiated his work towards an audience's desires (or towards Murray's 'orthodox' audience) thus became something to be experimented with and, to an extent, resisted in *Don Juan*. With their respective recalcitrance, their partnership was inevitably doomed.

With his newfound appreciation of the uncertainty of audience, Byron tenuously considered an audience in posterity, bolstered by his positive reception amongst international readers of varied classes. Utilising experience with his contoured audience and resistance to Wordsworth's ideology as creative influences, Byron constructed a world of uncertain possibilities and audience-engaging play in *Don Juan* to demonstrate that no poet could rigidly dictate the terms of his remembrance or even if he would be remembered.

Throughout Byron's career, then, Murray and Byron had created texts reliant upon the idea of a variegated audience as an influence in the creative process. Byron's texts are thus the result of a three-way creative interplay between Byron, his publishers, and their awareness of a new audience; they are polyvocal poems. However, Byron realised that, in the evolving conditions of the Romantic literary marketplace, the era he wrote within represented a tumultuous period of contradiction amongst the massed ranks of anonymous readers. *The Edinburgh* had instructed him that he must engage

that readership, but his experience throughout 1816 (and the writing of the Eastern Tales) had taught him that there were multiple audiences that he had to engage with, not a unified one. Hence, as an author, Byron produced a responsive poetry that experiments and plays with the various 'interpretative tendencies and ideological contours' of his audience, which were themselves 'ever-varying' and reflective of his own 'versified Aurora Borealis', *Don Juan*.

Case Study Two: Sir Walter Scott

Chapter Four: Scott's Turn To The Novel - *Waverley* (1814) to *The Antiquary* (1816)

Referring to the genre that would define his career in *The Quarterly Review*, Sir Walter Scott declared that the 'novel, therefore, is frequently "bread eaten in secret"' and that, traditionally, for contributors to such journals 'the regulation of this department [was] beneath the sober consideration of the critic'.¹ For an unconsidered genre to be read in private, Scott wrote a surprising number of them: twenty-eight in total.² Such production elevated Scott to, as St Clair describes him, 'by far, the most popular author of the Romantic period' in which he 'sold more novels than all the other novelists of the time put together', with his first, *Waverley; or, 'Tis Sixty Years Since* (1814), selling around 51,000 copies in the nineteenth-century.³ Until *Waverley*, Scott had been the preeminent poet of the Romantic era with such works as *The Lay Of The Last Minstrel* (1805) or *Marmion* (1808). However, with the arrival of *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* in 1812, Scott ceded the poetical throne to his competitor by stating that Byron had '[beat] me'.⁴ Turning to the novel in response, it would be Scott, in sales, who would ultimately 'beat' his rivals.

In this chapter I shall outline why Scott turned to the novel and, more importantly, why, instead of utilising his already established name (or brand) he chose to

¹ Scott states this idea on the novel in his review of Jane Austen's *Emma* (1815) for *The Quarterly Review* in October, 1815. Quoted in Annika Bautz, *The Reception of Jane Austen and Walter Scott: A Comparative Longitudinal Study*, (London; Continuum, 2007), p. 11.

² If we account for novellas like *The Black Dwarf* (1816) and novels posthumously published.

³ St Clair is talking mainly about Scott's posthumous sales here (in the cheap editions beginning around 1830)—but the 51,000 refers to his lifetime sales. Even so, this figure shows that *Waverley's* sales outpaced even Byron's most popular work, *The Corsair* (1814) by 26,000 copies. For Scott's print figures, see St Clair, *Reading Nation*, pp. 632–644.

⁴ Indeed, upon realising that Byron had 'beat' him in the poetic arena, Scott sent Murray an antique Turkish dagger for presentation to the poet as a mark of ceding the poetical crown. For Scott's comment on Byron 'beating him', the quote actually reads 'Byron bet me'. Additionally, Peter Cochran identifies that in his review of *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage, Canto III*, Scott admitted, thinking of his own poetic career in comparison, that 'no human invention can be infinitely fertile, as even the richest genius may be, in agricultural phrase, cropped out, and rendered sterile, and as each author must necessarily have a particular style in which he is supposed to excel, and must therefore be more or less a mannerist; no one can with prudence persevere in forcing himself before the public when from failure in invention, or from having rendered the peculiarities of his style over trite and familiar, the veteran "lags superfluous on the stage," a slighted mute in those dramas where he was once the principle personage.' See Peter Cochran, 'The Correspondence between Byron and Walter Scott, 1812-22' on <<https://peter-cochran.files.wordpress.com>> [accessed 30/04/19]; and for a description of Scott sending the dagger, see O'Connell, *Byron And John Murray*, p. 120; and *The Letters Of John Murray To Byron*, p. 42.

publish them anonymously. Whilst taking into account attitudes towards the genre, I shall demonstrate that Scott's anonymity was a carefully chosen ploy that allowed him to both engage with Romantic Britain's pressing cultural issues whilst being able to play with his audience by utilising a very mobile understanding of identity and truth. Building upon Jerome McGann's essay 'Walter Scott's Postmodernity' which argues that Scott creates 'a parade of his imaginary moves' by utilising various paratexts and prefatory characters such as the anonymous narrator of *Waverley* or 'Jedediah Cleishbotham' from the later *Tales Of My Landlord* series (1816–1819), I shall demonstrate how Scott creates multiple levels of fiction that rely on this mobile sense of truth and identity in order to interact directly, playfully, and responsively with the implications of his own commercial success.⁵ That is to say that Scott creates a paratextual world that obscures his authorship of the novels, which simultaneously interacts with the fictional worlds depicted in those novels, and the very real world of the Romantic print industry. Authorial personae that Scott creates, from 'the Author of *Waverley*' that emerges from his first three novels to 'Jedediah', or 'Lawrence Templeton' of *Ivanhoe* (1820), engage with each other and characters from the novels they have supposedly crafted, whilst also directly responding to and playing with Scott's understanding of Romantic era audiences.⁶

This chapter extends the recent revival of critical interest in Scott that has emerged with the wider scholarly interest in print culture and the literary marketplace in the Romantic period. At the heart of this development is the completion of the Edinburgh Edition of the *Waverley* Novels, a remarkable scholarly achievement that returns, importantly for my argument here, both to the manuscripts and the first editions that Scott's Romantic readers read, showing in remarkable detail the complexity of the novels' production processes. Such a revival in interest surrounding Scott has manifested in detailed exploration of him and his works, with notable studies like Penny Fielding on Scott's understanding of place (*Scotland and the Fictions of Geography* (2008)), Andrew Lincoln's *Walter Scott and Modernity* (2007), Murray Pittock's *The Reception of Sir Walter Scott in Europe* (2006), and Ian Duncan's study of Scott's centrality to the

⁵ Jerome McGann, 'Walter Scott's Postmodernity' in *Scotland and the Borders of Romanticism*, ed. Leith Davis, Ian Duncan, and Janet Sorensen, (Cambridge; Cambridge University Press, 2004), pp. 114–129.

⁶ Although, as I shall demonstrate, Constable was the first to directly create the tagline/persona of 'The Author Of *Waverley*' via his intervention in *Ivanhoe*'s (1819) publication.

Edinburgh book trade in the early nineteenth century, a time when that trade was unusually central to European literature, *Scott's Shadow: The Novel in Romantic Edinburgh* (2007).

Robert Mayer's recent *Walter Scott and Fame: Authors and Readers in the Romantic Age* (2017) is the study that comes closest to the approach I shall take. As I have explained in my introduction, the aspect that unites Scott, Byron, and Landon, in an alternative standpoint to Lucy Newlyn's 'anxiety of reception', is their embrace of a variegated audience as a crucial creative component in the composition of their texts (an embrace of the 'new power of reading'), which manifests itself in a cooperative, often experimental and playful, dynamic.⁷ Mayer's recent study argues along similar lines about Scott. As he argues, Scott's relationship to readers was defined by his audience's desire to 'collaborate with him in a variety of ways or otherwise share his authorial power', often leading to 'delicate negotiations' from which his texts were produced.⁸ Scott, accordingly, 'in a notably unWordsworthian vein, [argued] that authors ought to strive to be popular by making concessions to their readers'.⁹ The aim of Mayer's study, though, is to examine the interactions between Scott and his correspondents to better understand the idea of Romantic-era fame and its implications for modern 'celebrity', with discussion of Scott's poetry and novels introduced only to help understand his fame. My aim is to understand the creative process by which Scott, Byron, and Landon's texts came into being, with correspondence acting as an indicator, not of the functioning of fame, but of how Scott reflects on a new culture of readerships and negotiates the implications of his popularity amongst this culture within his composition process. For me, the crucial creative relationship is with the wider context of what Scott's peers described as the 'reading public', the ideas that formed in response to the newly enlarged audience for print. Although I, like Mayer, draw on correspondence addressed to Scott housed in the National Library of Scotland, this difference of focus means we have considered different parts of this archive, with my research mainly focussed on direct intervention into Scott's creative process by Scott's editors and the use of fan-mail to demonstrate the implications of this new culture of readerships: that readers are not passive, but rather respond to Scott directly and are aware of his playful creative process and their own position in the creation of his texts. Mayer's valuable book has informed my work, but the central claim I wish to make—that Scott's composition process was

⁷ Newlyn, p. 3.

⁸ Robert Mayer, *Walter Scott and Fame: Authors and Readers in the Romantic Age*, (Oxford; Oxford University Press, 2017), pp. 8–9.

⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 12–13.

governed by his playful relationship with audience—depends on a different understanding of the relationship between an author and the print market.

I shall demonstrate how such play (highlighted by McGann) is the result of Scott's concerns over the cultural status of the novel (which is best discussed by Ina Ferris's work on Scott) and his attempts to, according to Richard Cronin, 'cross-dress' the genre.¹⁰ In this sense, I shall consider both the gender studies of Ferris alongside the historicist focus on the literary marketplace that McGann proposes, in order to explain how Scott's paratexts and their play are 'postmodern', as McGann identifies. This is very different to the tactics Landon and Byron utilised to market their works to an audience as it does not rely on an audience believing themselves to possess an intimacy with a supposedly legible 'authentic' author based on either salacious details of their life (Byron) or Romantic gender conceptions (Landon). Indeed, Scott deliberately creates space between his audience and his private personality as part of the complex process of creativity that produced the Waverley novels.

The 'parade' of personae and paratexts that McGann describes relies, I argue, on a mobile sense of truth. In this case study, I will explore Scott's mobility as a way of negotiating his popularity by considering anonymous fan-mail Scott received, alongside his correspondence with friends, agents, publishers, editors, printers, and others. This work builds on recent scholarship which has mapped Scott's place in the Romantic marketplace, notably the groundbreaking essays on the texts in the Edinburgh Editions of the Waverley novels, and recent work on responses to Scott by Annika Bautz and Ann Rigney.¹¹ When analysing such responses, it is apparent that large swathes of Scott's audience acknowledged his paratexts as an elaborate authorial drama, even whilst knowing or suspecting Scott to be their real author. Such readers, evidently enjoying the exuberant dialogue and the interacting, layered worlds he had created, chose to play along with his game. Critics have long since identified that Scott's novels are fascinated with borderlines (like that between England and Scotland); however, I will contend that

¹⁰ See McGann, 'Walter Scott's Postmodernity'; Cronin, *Paper Pellets*, pp. 204–212; and Ina Ferris, *The Achievement of Literary Authority: Gender, History, and the Waverley Novels*, (Ithaca, NY; Cornell University Press, 1991).

¹¹ Many of the letters I shall discuss are previously unconsidered, comprising part of the collection of Scott correspondence at The National Library Of Scotland, especially anonymous fanmail. Also, see Bautz; and Ann Rigney, *The Afterlives of Walter Scott: Memory on the Move*, (Oxford; Oxford University Press, 2012).

Scott's novels revel in even more ambiguous areas than these.¹² Examples of these are his various adopted personae, the use of paratexts, a mobile sense of truth or history, audience engagement, and the intersection of the literary market and culture into his novels. Scott's play and anonymity did not just extend to his audience, but also to those who published his works.¹³ Whilst Scott's anonymity and personae allowed him to toy with his public, I shall also demonstrate how it allowed him to do likewise with his publishers, and to maintain a position of power and influence over them once he had become so successful. Consequently, I shall present Scott's use of personae throughout his career as motivated by both a playfulness with audience and a shrewd manipulation of the print industry that he operated within.

Thus, this case study shall be divided into three chapters which each detail important developments in Scott's novel-writing career. It is not within the scope of this case study to discuss Scott's earlier poetry as it is primarily in the anonymous novels where Scott most fruitfully plays with his audience and, unfortunately, this discussion must be kept succinct in order to compare Scott to Byron and Landon's interactions with audience. This chapter shall explain and explore Scott's use of anonymity in the initial three Waverley novels, which produced a unique relationship with the novels' publisher, Archibald Constable, as well as Scott's trusted confidantes and printers, John and James Ballantyne. This dynamic was crucial in sculpting Scott's career up until 1825. I shall demonstrate how such anonymity allowed Scott to critique and experiment within a Romantic literary culture which he found occasionally problematic. Aspects of this are all evident within *Waverley*, *Guy Mannering* (1815), and *The Antiquary* (1816).

Chapter Five shall discuss Scott's novels between 1816–1824, or the period where Scott more fully developed his paratextual material and personae, introducing new authorial characters and dynamics that shaped his relationships to both audience and publishers. I end this chapter with a consideration of Scott's texts immediately prior to 1824 for one important reason: the career-altering crash in the literature market of

¹² For example, the collection of essays in *Scotland and the Borders of Romanticism* or Susan Oliver, *Scott, Byron, and the Poetics of Cultural Encounter*, (London; Palgrave Macmillan, 2005).

¹³ Initially, only James Ballantyne knew of Scott's authorship of *Waverley* despite his brother, John Ballantyne, acting as Scott's agent in negotiations with publishers. Both brothers, though, would eventually act as an influence and medium through which Scott could shape his texts (until John's death in 1821). Constable initially did not know of Scott's identity but suspected him. He was then informed of Scott's authorship and admitted into the writing of the novels, albeit as a more junior partner in their creation compared to James Ballantyne, whose input was valued more. In the writing of *The Tales Of My Landlord* series, Murray suspected and played along with Scott's game only to be rebuffed (or not admitted) in finding out the author of *Waverley's* identity.

late 1825. Around this period, Constable was terminally ill, meaning that his partner Robert Cadell took over the editorial duties of Constable and Co., including Scott's works.

My sixth chapter shall cover the editorial dynamic that shaped Scott, James Bal-lantyne and Cadell's production of *The Betrothed* and *The Talisman* (both part of *The Tales Of The Crusaders* published in 1825), before discussing the restrictive effects the 1825 crash had upon Scott's will and ability to play with his audience in *Woodstock* (1826), and the eventual forced destruction of his anonymity (and the space and bound-aries in which Scott played) in the preface to *The Chronicles Of The Canongate* (1827). To begin, though, we must know why Scott chose anonymity in the first place.

Waverley's Anonymity

Looking back on publishing *Waverley* anonymously, Scott, in his 'General Preface' for the 1829 Magnum Opus edition stated that his 'original motive' 'was the consciousness that it was an experiment on the public taste which might very probably fail, and that therefore there was no occasion to take on myself the personal risk of discomfiture.'¹⁴ Despite the embellishment and myth the author built into his tales of composition in the Magnum editions, Scott here is likely being truthful. As a popular poet with no back-ground in novel writing, *Waverley* was indeed an experiment which, due to Scott's ano-nymity, could be ended without scandal were it to fail.

There are, though, numerous factors that led to Scott's decision to leave the au-thor's name unattached.¹⁵ Chief amongst these was the cultural stigma attached to nov-els or, more specifically, the 'gothic' novel, as Ina Ferris and Richard Cronin have re-spectively demonstrated.¹⁶ Whilst the genre had a long and illustrious line of male writ-ers such as Defoe, Swift, or Sterne, Clara Reeve states in her essay *The Progress Of Ro-mance* (1785), that the 'Novel is a picture of real life and manners, and of the time in

¹⁴ Sir Walter Scott, 'General Preface' in *Introductions and Notes from the Magnum Opus: Wa-verley to The Wars of the Montrose*, ed. J.H. Alexander, P.D. Garside, and Claire Lamont, (Ed-inburgh; Edinburgh University Press, 2012), pp. 14–15.

¹⁵ Seamus Cooney offers an exploration of Scott's use of anonymity in his novels by analysing Scott's comments throughout his career, identifying a total of eleven different reasons for Scott's initial and continued use of anonymity. See Seamus Cooney, 'Scott's Anonymity—Its Motives and Consequences' in *Studies in Scottish Literature*, Vol. 10, Issue 4, (January 1973), pp. 207–219.

¹⁶ See Ferris, pp. 1-10; and Cronin, *Paper Pellets*, pp. 204–212.

which it was written'.¹⁷ In contrast, the gothic (or novels set in past or exotic locations) was considered by some to be a particularly feminine form. Indeed, before Scott, the market for novels was dominated by women such as Maria Edgeworth, Charlotte Smith, or Ann Radcliffe, whose novels were frequently gothic, with the genre being 'guaranteed' as feminine by, as Cronin states, 'a readership that included in its number so many women'.¹⁸ As Mayer highlights, the genre was established by Horace Walpole with *The Castle Of Otranto* (1764), who defended it as setting up 'the powers of fancy at liberty to expatiate through the boundless realms of invention' in contrast to novels where 'the great resources of fancy had been dammed up, by a strict adherence to common life'.¹⁹ Whilst the gothic author could establish their text in a real setting, such as Italy or France in Radcliffe's works, Walpole defends his genre by suggesting that such a setting need not be accurate and supported by notations and facts but may, in large part, be the product of 'the powers of fancy at liberty'. Walpole's statement echoes Scott's own in the advertisement of the Magnum edition of *Waverley* where he claimed the 'places where the scenes are laid' during the Jacobite rebellion of 1745 in Scotland as 'altogether, or in part, real'.²⁰ Evidently, like Radcliffe's Italy (or, indeed, Landon's poetic Italy), Scott's Scotland is a region based in both reality and fancy.

Just as the gothic novel was considered a female realm of fiction, so too were its readers widely considered to be primarily women. The period's attitudes to novels is best exemplified by *The British Critic*'s claim to its readers. Apparently 'novel-reading ladies [should] give [*The British Critic* an] abundance of thanks' for protecting and sparing them the trouble of reading novels which ended up disappointments.²¹ Addressing its readers directly, *The British Critic* states:

To Miss Caroline, or Miss Fanny, confined at home without company on a rainy afternoon, and who has consoled herself with the hope of a rich treat from the

¹⁷ Quoted in Alexander Welsh, *The Hero of the Waverley Novels with New Essays on Scott*, (Princeton, NJ; Princeton University Press, 1992), p. 9.

¹⁸ Cronin, *Paper Pellets*, p. 207.

¹⁹ See Horace Walpole, *The Castle of Otranto: A Gothic Story*, ed. W. S. Lewis, (Oxford; Oxford University Press, 1964), p. 7, quoted in Robert Mayer, 'The Illogical Status of Novelistic Discourse: Scott's Footnotes for the Waverley Novels' in *ELH*, Volume 66, Number 4, (Winter 1999), pp. 911–938 (p. 920).

²⁰ Scott, 'Advertisement' in *Introductions and Notes from the Magnum Opus: Waverley to The Wars of the Montrose*, p. 7.

²¹ Quoted in Bautz, pp. 10–11.

last novel, which John has been dispatched to procure, it must surely be a shocking thing to find, that the anxiously-expected novel is so “abominably stupid” that she cannot get through it; and that she has no other resource than to strum over her favourite airs, draw half a rose, or a bit of a tree, or add a score of meshes to a piece of netting, which is now taken up for the hundred and fiftieth time. It is to avert from the fair such a serious evil as this that we encounter Christabelle. Forewarned, forearmed, says the old adage.²²

As Bautz highlights, the passage reveals the common assumptions from the period regarding gothic novels and their readers. Firstly, that they are trifles not to be taken seriously (like ‘needlework’), which serve the purpose merely of preventing boredom in young women. Secondly, these novels must not be too intellectually demanding for the fairer feminine faculties.²³

Whilst Ferris’ discussion of Scott thus locates him at an intersection whereby he attempts to ‘masculinise’ the novel, it is perhaps Cronin’s analysis that best explains Scott’s relationship to the novel and his newly targeted audience, and which, I shall demonstrate, leads Scott to the ‘postmodern play’ McGann identifies. As Scott’s correspondence with female novelists like Maria Edgeworth around this period demonstrate, in taking up the genre of novels, Scott was ‘trained under [a] female discipline’ which may lead to the charge that, as Cronin puts it, he was little more than an ‘effeminate hermaphrodite’.²⁴ As Cronin states, ‘Scott set out confidently to masculinise the novel, but his novels seem haunted by a suspicion that the masculine novel may simply be the novel in drag’.²⁵ In such an environment, Scott’s reluctance to admit to *Waverley*, which is not a gothic novel but borrows gothic features (especially after the high fame of his *Marmion*), appears understandable. In choosing not to tag ‘Scott’ to *Waverley*, the author is thus displaying an anxiousness in relation to his newfound position in writing a ‘low’ or ‘feminine’ kind of literature. As I shall demonstrate, playing with identity and truth was a response to Scott’s new concerns.

²² Ibid.

²³ Ibid., p. 11.

²⁴ One example of Scott’s emulation of female writers is evident in his response to Maria Edgeworth’s letter to the ‘anonymous’ author of *Waverley*, which was sent through James Ballantyne. See Scott, ‘To Maria Edgeworth, 10 November, 1814’ in *The Letters of Sir Walter Scott*, vol 3, pp. 517–519; and Cronin, *Paper Pellets*, p. 212.

²⁵ Cronin, *Paper Pellets*, pp. 210–211.

Contrasting with *The British Critic*, Scott, reviewing Jane Austen's *Emma* (1815) in *The Quarterly Review* (although with his own *Waverley* in mind), suggests that both men and women should read novels as a serious form of literature:

A novel, therefore, is frequently "bread eaten in secret".... We have been pleading our own cause by stating the universal practice, and preparing [the reader] for a display of more general acquaintance with this fascinating department of literature, than at first sight may seem consistent with the graver studies to which we are compelled by duty: but in truth... we cannot austere-ly condemn the source from which is drawn the alleviation of such a portion of human misery, or consider the regulation of this department as beneath the sober consideration of the critic.²⁶

If Scott sees novels as worthy of *The Quarterly's* 'sober consideration', then gothic novels themselves are worthy of their readers, thus making their writing also a worthy pursuit for both sexes. In *The Achievement of Literary Authority* (1991), Ferris argues that by incorporating history into his novels, Scott 'legitimate[d] novel writing as a literary activity', 'validate[d] novel reading as a male practice'. 'Scott's fictions', she argues, 'were as much sign of the historical as of the literary, and the whole question of their cultural authority hinged on this double identification.' Accordingly, the 'validation effected by *Waverley* and its successors depended crucially on their appropriation of history'.²⁷ The 'experimental' 'historical romance' of *Waverley*, and its immediate preceding novels, as well as his review of *Emma* in *The Quarterly*, must then be seen as an attempt by Scott to reorientate Romantic perceptions of the act of writing and reading novels.²⁸ *Waverley* represents not just Scott's first leap into novel-writing, but a first attempt to validate novels as part of a male-dominated literary landscape.²⁹

Additionally, Scott's previous ventures into literary culture through his poetry, whilst having achieved huge commercial success, had, according to John Sutherland as

²⁶ Quoted in Bautz, p. 11.

²⁷ I shall explore this idea of masculinising the novel more in Chapter Five. See Ferris, pp. 10, 7, 10.

²⁸ The 'Historical Romance' tag attached to the *Waverley* novels was a description Scott provided himself as part of this attempt to 'masculinise the novel'.

²⁹ Cronin argues that such a move 'offers Scott a device that allows him at once to register and make light of an anxious sense that in writing novels he is himself cross dressing' or, in other words, that he is 'cross-dressing' the novel. See Cronin, *Paper Pellets*, p. 211.

well as P.D. Garside, also made him wary of re-entry into the market with such an experimental venture due to negative reviews of *Marmion*. Francis Jeffrey's estimation of *Marmion* in *The Edinburgh Review*, for instance, was particularly cutting despite the fact that Scott had seen drafts of the review for approval before printing and had, according to his letters, dined with Jeffrey and had 'a hearty laugh at the revisal of the flagellation'.³⁰ As Sutherland notes, 'for his part Scott maintained a public mask of indifference against criticism like Jeffrey's, but privately he chafed. William Erskine, who knew him most intimately at this period, correctly judged he was "much hurt"'.³¹ Additionally, Garside suggests that Thomas Tegg's satirical tales *Lady Of the Lake* (1810) and *Marmion Travestied* (1809) illuminated Scott to his vulnerability as a poet and encouraged him to become a novelist.³² Having achieved poetic success, and not being willing to risk it, *Waverley's* anonymous publication was thus not only protective against a view of novel writing as feminine, but also of the vagaries of Romantic critical culture.

However, I suggest that there was an additional motivation for Scott's choice of publishing *Waverley* anonymously, one that was far less defensive and more suggestive of the playful relationship he was to develop with his audience: he enjoyed the game. This is best seen in his correspondence in which Scott playfully denies being *Waverley's* creator. In a letter to his brother, Thomas Scott, on October of 1814, for instance, Scott writes that:

A novel here called *Waverley*, has had enormous success. I sent you a copy, and will send you another, with the *Lord of the Isles*, which will be out at Christmas. The success which it has had, with some other circumstances, has induced people "To lay the bantling at a certain door, Where lying store of faults, they'd fain heap more." You will guess for yourself how far such a report has credibility; but by no means give the weight of your opinion to the Transatlantic public; for

³⁰ See Francis Jeffrey, 'Unsigned Review of *Marmion*' in *The Edinburgh Review*, xii, (April 1808), pp. 1–35, in *Scott: The Critical Heritage*, ed. John O. Hayden, (London; Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1970), pp. 79–84; and Scott, 'To Robert Surtees, 18 April 1808' in *The Letters of Sir Walter Scott*, vol. 2, p. 54.

³¹ John Sutherland, *The Life of Walter Scott*, (Oxford; Blackwell Publishers, 1997), p. 127.

³² P.D. Garside, 'Essay On The Text' in Sir Walter Scott, *Waverley*, ed. P.D. Garside, (Edinburgh; Edinburgh University Press, 2007), p. 378.

you must know there is also a counter-report, that *you* have written the said *Waverley*.³³

Whilst not admitting to *Waverley*'s authorship, Scott toys with his brother in his rhyme by suggesting Thomas 'guess for yourself' whether reports of Walter being its author are true. The suggestion that Thomas wrote the novel not only highlights the suspicions of the British public, but also teasingly hides Walter's authorship whilst hinting to Thomas that he may equally enjoy engaging with the public speculation.

However, the best example of Scott playing with his correspondent's suspicions regarding his authorship of the novel is in his letter to Maria Edgeworth where he claims 'I am desired by the Author of *Waverley*, to acknowledge, in his name, the honour you have done him by your most flattering approbation of his work—a distinction which he receives as one of the highest that could be paid him, and which he would have been proud to have himself stated his sense of, only that being impersonal, he thought it more respectful to require my assistance than to write an anonymous letter'. He then goes on to suggest that the author of *Waverley*, a person distinct from himself, wished to communicate to Edgeworth how indebted he was to her own works as a model of influence. Scott indeed quotes *Waverley*'s anonymous author, known only to him amongst a few, as saying:

"If I could but hit Miss Edgeworth's wonderful power of vivifying all her persons, and making them live as real beings in your mind, I should not be afraid:"—Often has the Author of *Waverley* used such language to me; and I knew that I gratified him most when I could say,—“Positively this is equal to Miss Edgeworth.” You will thus judge, Madam, how deeply he must feel such praise as you have bestowed upon his efforts.

In greater detail than anyone but the author could relay, Scott then describes the advantages and deficiencies of certain characters in *Waverley*, before, despite being 'not authorized to say', stating 'that another novel, descriptive of more ancient manners

³³ The quoted line is from Garrick's Prologue to *Polly Honeycombe*, a play about the potential effects of novel reading, with the line specifying journals heaping a novels' faults more so than wit at the author's door. See Scott, 'To Thomas Scott, October 1814' in *The Letters of Sir Walter Scott*, vol. 3, p. 502.

still, may be expected ere long from the Author of *Waverley*'. In a final flourish, reinforcing the link, Scott then goes on to advertise his upcoming poem *The Lord of The Isles* (1815).³⁴ The fact that Scott can so accurately portray the feelings of the author of *Waverley* to Edgeworth, despite his denials that they are the same person, along with his knowledge of the upcoming second instalment, *Guy Mannering*, and his final advertisement linking the poems of Scott to the novels, suggests Scott is comfortable playing the thin disguise. Such unacknowledged thin truth is mirrored in Edgeworth's Latin claim in a letter to James Ballantyne that *Waverley* was written by 'Aut Scott, aut Diabolus': 'either Scott, or the devil'.³⁵

Waverley's anonymous publication thus arose partially from Scott's wariness of attaching his respected name to such an experiment in novel writing that borrows heavily from the gothic, a genre that was widely considered in the period to be a woman's pursuit.³⁶ However, continued anonymity can arguably be attributed to Scott's wider enjoyment of the game of cat-and-mouse he developed with his correspondents and audience. As we shall see, both of these factors created a game that Scott not only revelled in, but expanded and developed when he created multiple personae and a personality to the 'Author of Waverley' after 1816. Scott's anonymity evidently worked in relation to his audience too. In her study of responses to Scott's work, Bautz highlights that 'of the thirteen contemporary reviews of *Waverley*, all apart from two' 'discuss its authorship, though this interest fades in articles on the subsequent novels. Reviewers were not usually interested in the identity of anonymous novelists. This shows that they regard *Waverley* as noteworthy and therefore the work of a higher intellect than that which critics usually associate with novel-writing.'³⁷ *The British Critic*, for instance, states that 'though [*Waverley*] came into the world in the modest garb of anonymous obscurity, the northern literati are unanimous, as we understand, in ascribing part of it at least to the

³⁴ See Scott, 'To Maria Edgeworth, 10 November 1814' in *The Letters of Sir Walter Scott*, vol. 3, pp. 517–518.

³⁵ 'Maria Edgeworth: A Letter— "To the Author Of Waverley, 23 October 1814"' which was sent to James Ballantyne' in *Scott: The Critical Heritage*, p. 75.

³⁶ However, it is important to note that most novels of the day were published anonymously in line with the traditions of the eighteenth century and due to publishers' desire to impose uniformity upon novels which would be primarily read in circulating libraries. As we shall see, this was not Constable's initial intention either. He failed in his attempts to persuade Scott to publish *Waverley* under his name.

³⁷ Since most novels of the period were published anonymously (meaning such en masse speculation about each novel's unknown author would be pointless), *Waverley*'s reception proved a special case indeed. See Bautz, p. 25.

pen of W. Scott', suggesting that though Scott 'has too much good sense to play the coquet', his denial 'proceeds almost as faintly from his mouth, as from the tone of a notorious offender at the bar of the Old Bailey.'³⁸ Commentators even identified Scott's tactics outright, with Henry Cockburn declaring in 1846: 'if the concealment of the authorship of the novels was intended to make mystery heighten their effect, it completely succeeded. The speculations and conjectures, and nods and winks, and predictions and assertions were endless, and occupied every company, and almost every two men who met and spoke on the street.'³⁹ Scott's anonymity in *Waverley* was thus the product not only of wariness of Romantic critical culture and conceptions surrounding the gothic, but also, according to Cockburn, an example of how Scott learned that anonymity increased public interest and stimulated desire for the next instalment to continue the chase.

Scott's anonymity extended beyond his audience though, with the poet going to great lengths to disguise his novel writing from his longtime publisher, Archibald Constable. Indeed, only a few select confidantes were privy to *Waverley*'s authorship including Scott's friend John Morritt, who offered advice on the text, and Scott's business partner in the printing firm Ballantyne & Co., James Ballantyne. James Ballantyne had been a childhood friend of Scott's and he, at the urging of the writer, moved to Edinburgh in 1800 to set up his printing firm to publish a Scottish Tory Register.⁴⁰ Scott became James' secret business partner in 1802, ultimately having the final say on what they produced. It was in the publishing of Scott's *Lay Of The Last Minstrel* (1805) that Ballantyne's printers flourished, with the poem selling 15,000 copies within five years of publication.⁴¹ With such a relationship, it is little wonder James was invited in as one of the privileged few to know Scott's plans. But, more than this, James Ballantyne can also be seen as a key voice in the construction of the Waverley novels, acting as an editor who drew Scott's attention to inconsistencies and gaps in the text, as well as altering punctuation and lexis.⁴² Scott usually trusted James' minor changes to go to press without consultation.

³⁸ 'Waverley: Unsigned Review, in *The British Critic*, August 1814, ns ii, pp. 189–211' in *Scott: The Critical Heritage*, p. 68.

³⁹ Henry Cockburn, *Memorials Of His Time*, (Edinburgh; Adam and Charles Black, 1846), p. 281, quoted in Bautz, p. 55.

⁴⁰ Sutherland, pp. 84–86.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 105.

⁴² From the relationship, it is clear to see that James Ballantyne acted as far more than just a proof-reader. He often sculpted passages of Scott's texts himself through suggestion and unopposed editing.

Indeed, James can be seen to have had a key influence on the composition of *Waverley*. Writing to Scott on the 15th of September, 1810, James praises the manuscript: ‘What you have wrote of *Waverley* has amused me very much; and certainly if I had read it as part of a new novel, the remainder of which was open to my perusal, I would have proceeded with avidity.’⁴³ Whilst James was provided with likely only chapters three and four judging by the letter, he advises that he sees ‘The account of the studies of *Waverley* [as] unnecessarily minute.’ He goes on:

I can see at once the connection between the studies of *Don Quixote*, and the female Quixote, and the events of their lives; but I have not yet been able to [see] betwixt *Waverley*’s character and his studies any such clear and decided connection. The account, in short, seemed to me too particular; quite unlike your usual mode in your poetry, and less happy. It may be, however, that the further progress of the character will defeat this criticism. The character itself I think excellent & interesting; and I am equally delighted and astonished to find, in the last written chapter, that you can paint to the eye in prose, as well as in verse.⁴⁴

James Ballantyne’s claim that he cannot see the connection between *Waverley* and his unguided studies, as well as his pointing out of the similarities between *Waverley*, Cervantes’ *Don Quixote* (1615), and Charlotte Lennox’s *The Female Quixote* (1752), guided Scott’s next steps in composition. *Waverley*’s character, as I shall later discuss, is deficient in many ways, leading him to join and abandon the Jacobite cause, switch affections for women easily, and fail to meaningfully impact the novel’s historical events. As I shall demonstrate, this is linked to his education, the education James urges Scott to make more of a connection to. Similarly, in the opening comments to Chapter Five, the author declares:

From the minuteness with which I have traced *Waverley*’s pursuits, and the bias which these unavoidably communicated to his imagination, the reader may perhaps anticipate, in the following tale, an imitation of the romance of Cervantes. But he will do my prudence injustice in the supposition. My intention is not to

⁴³ It is important to note that *Waverley* was likely started in 1808, not 1805 as Scott later claimed, then continued in 1810-1813, meaning James’ input was during its actual composition, not after. See ‘James Ballantyne to Scott, 15 September 1810’ in The National Library Of Scotland Collection (NLS), MS3879, pp. 189–90.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

follow the steps of that inimitable author, in describing such total perversion of intellect as misconstrues the objects actually presented to the senses, but that more common aberration from sound judgment, which apprehends occurrences indeed in their reality, but communicates to them a tincture of its own romantic tone and colouring.⁴⁵

Garside's Edinburgh Edition essay on *Waverley* suggests that it is likely that James's comments, having just examined the previous chapters, influenced Scott's denial of following in Cervantes's footsteps.⁴⁶ *Waverley* thus demonstrates an editorial dynamic that would shape and intervene in Scott's writing of his novels, whereby Ballantyne was trusted to intervene and offer advice, producing a poly-vocal text.

Constable, though, was not initially invited into the creative process, although he did, through his handling of the author of *Waverley*, have a guiding hand in its reception. With *Marmion* (1808) Constable entered Scott's life as a major force and collaborator in his works. Kelvin Everest explains that 'Four great publishers had emerged by the beginning of the nineteenth century. Two of them, Thomas Longman and John Murray, were based in London; the other two, Archibald Constable and William Blackwood, were based in Edinburgh.'⁴⁷ He goes on to explain that whilst the four were friends, political and economic rivalries were active amongst all of them: a theme that would shape parts of Scott's career, as we shall see. Of the four, Constable was the most innovative. He founded *The Edinburgh Review*, revolutionising the profession of higher journalism.⁴⁸ He manipulated book pricing and volumes, indirectly leading to the boom of circulating libraries, and 'devised a sophisticated form of the mixed list, on which British general trade publishing has since regularly relied'.⁴⁹ Constable had published most of Scott's works up until *Waverley*, and when John Ballantyne (James's brother) approached him with the anonymous manuscript, Constable immediately suspected (and subsequently discovered) Scott as its author. Such were the lengths Scott went to maintain his anonymity that he often had James Ballantyne copy the manuscript before it went to any of Scott's publishers. In between James and the publishers, John Ballantyne

⁴⁵ Scott, *Waverley*, p. 20.

⁴⁶ Garside, 'Essay On The Text' in Scott, *Waverley*, p. 377.

⁴⁷ Everest, p. 70.

⁴⁸ For a discussion of Constable's role in setting up *The Edinburgh Review*, see Sutherland, p. 123; and Ian Duncan, *Scott's Shadow: The Novel in Romantic Edinburgh*, (Princeton, NJ; Princeton University Press, 2007), p. 25.

⁴⁹ Sutherland, p. 123.

acted as Scott's agent, negotiating many of the author's contracts up until he died in 1821.⁵⁰ Accordingly, whilst confident in Scott, Constable was unsure of the novel's likely success and thus offered half the profits of *Waverley* to the author, as well as taking on the burden of some of Ballantyne And Co.'s unsold stock.⁵¹ This was a highly unusual contract for the period. For example, as Garside points out, 'on 3 May 1815 Constable advised William Tennant, now considered the last original Scottish poet of his generation, that he should ask for fifty guineas (£52.50) for the right to publish an edition of 1000 copies of his major poem *Anster Fair*. That was the reality of authorial remuneration; the kind of deal negotiated by John Ballantyne for Scott was truly exceptional.'⁵² Constable would later come to regret such a deal when *Waverley* proved to be the most successful novel of the period.

Whilst Constable thus had no direct hand in the composition of *Waverley*, he had perhaps the largest influence on the success of the novels. Initially, suspecting *Waverley* to be written by Scott, he demanded of John Ballantyne that the book be printed under the author's name, thus tapping into the already established corpus of Scott's poetry. When John informed him the author wished to remain anonymous, Constable acceded, turning his efforts to marketing the mystery author to the best of his abilities. As we shall see, whilst Constable did not approve of or invent the 'Great Unknown' mystery of who the author of *Waverley* was, it was largely his marketing and play upon it that would create the *Waverley* novels' success and the space for Scott to play with identity and truth in his prefaces. The author of *Waverley* became the 'Great Unknown', whereby *Waverley*'s readers fervently speculated upon who could have published the novel to an almost greater extent than they discussed its contents.⁵³ Furthermore, whilst

⁵⁰ Indeed, at this point, even John Ballantyne did not know the identity of the author of *Waverley*, despite being his agent in contract negotiations.

⁵¹ In response to taking on Ballantyne's unsold stock, Constable hinted at the knowledge of Scott's authorship when he reportedly remarked 'I like well Scott's ain bairns, but heaven preserve me from those of his fathering!' It would not be until 1815 that Constable was eventually informed of Scott's authorship. Quoted in Sutherland, p. 151.

⁵² David Hewitt, 'Essay On The Text' in Sir Walter Scott, *The Antiquary*, ed. David Hewitt, (Edinburgh; Edinburgh University Press, 1995), p. 363.

⁵³ Bautz cites a number of sources which reveal the fascination the 'Great Unknown' mystery created in Scott's readers, like Lady Anne Romilly who remained fascinated by the game of anonymity and pseudonymity Scott was playing when he published the *Tales Of My Landlord* under the pseudonym Jedediah Cleishbotham: 'Pray read "Tales Of My Landlord". They are charming. I think there can be no doubt but that they are written by the Author of *Waverley* altho' it is not avow'd who that is. If it is not Walter Scott it is marvellous. I saw a gentleman the other day who told me that he had seen the manuscript in America in the hands of Walter Scott's Brother who there avow'd himself the Author.' Bautz cites this from Anne Romilly, *Romilly Edgeworth Letters, 1813-1818*, ed. Samuel Henry Romilly, (London; John Murray, 1936), p. 161, quoted in Bautz, p. 54.

Scott had recognised that by making *Waverley* an Englishman exploring a Scotland many would never visit he would appeal to the English market, it was Constable's hard work which cemented the novel as a success south of the border. England was the largest literary market of the day, meaning if *Waverley* was to be successful it could not just appeal to the Scottish. Constable slaved to sell *Waverley*'s copyright to Longman, one of the 'leviathans of Paternoster Row,' thus planting the seed for the novel's success in fertile English soil and, in the process, saving his own business and making *Waverley* a rapid success.

Whilst *Waverley* can thus be seen as the collaborative product of Scott's imagination pushed through the audience-centred prism of Ballantyne's criticism (and a material desire for the novel to appeal to the English market), the novel's creative and commercial success can also be viewed as a joint effort between Scott, the Ballantyne brothers, and Constable's hard work and opportunistic marketing. Between them they set up a new dynamic whereby James Ballantyne acted as a latent creative partner in the *Waverley* novels, streamlining them for audience consumption and, at times, influencing the plot, whilst Constable had little direct creative input but governed the marketing of the novels. It was a dynamic that would help mould the *Waverley* novels throughout most of Scott's novel writing career.

***Waverley* And The Perils Of Unguided Reading**

Whilst Scott's use of anonymity helped him to manoeuvre through the negotiations between printers, literary agents, and publishers, *Waverley*'s tale itself responds to a shifting Romantic marketplace for literature by warning of the dangers of unguided reading. As I have outlined in my Introduction, the Romantic period was a unique era of evolving readerships and economic turmoil in the literary marketplace. Reformed legislation and market conditions contributed to an explosion in literary production whereby there were more books on the market than ever before. Clearly, with his collaborative establishment with John Murray of *The Quarterly Review* in response to Constable's *Edinburgh Review*, Scott was concerned about the ramifications of such shifts.⁵⁴ *Waverley*, at the urgings of James Ballantyne discussed above, directly attempts to address such concerns, whilst also representing a product of Scott's own concerns about writing

⁵⁴ Upon hearing that Scott had taken up with Murray in publication of *The Quarterly*, Constable admitted his grudging respect for the competition, stating 'Ay, there is such a thing as rearing the oak until it can support itself.' Quoted in Sutherland, p. 136.

within a female guided genre that was viewed as ‘low’ and, in his own words, previously ‘[in]consistent with the graver studies’ of literary journals and men.

This is achieved via the chapters that Ballantyne examined: Chapters Three and Four. In them, Scott depicts Edward Waverley’s education as unstructured and his reading, amongst the vast library of his home Waverley-Honour, as guided solely by his whim. The author states that in place of guided knowledge, ‘with a desire of amusement therefore, which better discipline might soon have converted into a thirst for knowledge, young Waverley drove through the sea of books, like a vessel without a pilot or a rudder.’⁵⁵ Waverley thus reads only for amusement and travels to Scotland with little understanding of contemporary politics, local customs, or indeed any self-discipline. The invocation of reading as guided by Waverley’s ‘amusement’ and not by a ‘thirst for knowledge’ also hints that his library is well stocked with trashy novels. Andrea Coldwell highlights that this results in Fergus, the chieftain to whom Waverley aligns himself with the Jacobite cause, commenting that Waverley ‘is a worshipper of the Celtic muse, not the less so perhaps that he does not understand a word of her language’ and that, upon hearing some verses of poetry, Waverley likes them as he ‘does not comprehend them’.⁵⁶ Evidently Waverley, with his loose education, reads for pleasure, not because he comprehends what the texts mean.

Waverley’s unguided education means that he neither comprehends literature properly, nor the world around him and the consequences of his actions. His abdicating of responsibility in Volume One when Balmawhapple challenges Waverley to a duel, in which the Baron Bradwardine takes his place, demonstrates that Waverley does not understand the scenario, has no self-discipline to wake up in time for the duel, nor strength in his convictions.⁵⁷ For instance, having joined the Jacobite cause and capturing Colonel Talbot as an enemy combatant, Waverley declared to him that:

“I cannot commit you, Colonel Talbot,” answered Waverley, “to speak of any plan which turns on my deserting an enterprise in which I have engaged hastily, but certainly voluntarily, and with the purpose of abiding the issue”⁵⁸

⁵⁵ Scott, *Waverley*, p. 14.

⁵⁶ See Andrea Coldwell, ‘Unacknowledged Intellect: Scott’s Changing Reputation and an Alternative Victorian Critical Mode’ in *Authorship*, Vol. 2, Issue 1, (November 2012), pp. 1–13 (p. 6); and Scott, *Waverley*, p. 110.

⁵⁷ Scott, *Waverley*, pp. 54–57.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 257.

However, Waverley ultimately does abandon his cause, once again displaying a lack of principle and an ignorance of the realities of modern politics. Indeed, even in battle Waverley performs poorly, driving forth with his regiment to ultimately kill no adversary but only, in the end, to protect the enemy combatant Talbot.⁵⁹ Such actions inevitably lead to Fergus telling Waverley that ‘you are blown about with every wind of doctrine’.⁶⁰ The point is not simply that Waverley is a coward, but that his character is unfixed, a result of his inadequate and unguided reading.

Waverley’s wavering character (a deliberate pun) was by design, as Scott’s correspondence shows. In a letter to Morritt, Scott states ‘I am heartily glad you continued to like *Waverley* to the end—the hero is a sneaking piece of imbecility and if he had married Flora she would have set him up upon the chimney-piece as Count Boralaski’s wife used to do with him’.⁶¹ Likely at the urging of James Ballantyne in order to justify Waverley’s lacklustre education in Chapters Three and Four, Scott ultimately creates a character that has no metaphorical spine, solid comprehension of the world around him, or understanding of the consequences of his actions. Coldwell accurately suggests that Waverley’s loose education and consequentially poor character acts as an attempt by Scott to educate his audience of the perils of unguided and undisciplined reading (and, indeed, even the reading of certain novels), by contrasting Waverley to themselves: readers who are properly informed by a meticulous narrator providing historical notes and apt observations.⁶²

Scott’s audience clearly picked up on such intentions, although they could arguably have been nudged in this direction since, in his own review of the *Tales Of My Landlord* in *The Quarterly Review*, (echoing Fergus), Scott explicitly labeled Waverley ‘a reed blown about at the pleasure of every breeze’.⁶³ *The British Critic* also commented on the novel’s protagonist that ‘We were much pleased with the following remarks upon a mode of education which is daily gaining ground, and threatens, by its extension to advanced periods of youth, to render the minds of the rising generation pert, superficial, and effeminate.’⁶⁴ Commenting on the boom in print literature and the dangers of unguided reading on unformed minds, it states:

⁵⁹ Ibid., pp. 238–242.

⁶⁰ Ibid. p. 252.

⁶¹ Scott, ‘To John B.S. Morritt, 28 July 1814’ in *The Letters of Sir Walter Scott*, vol. 3, p. 478.

⁶² Coldwell, pp. 5–7.

⁶³ Scott, ‘Review Of “Tales Of My Landlord, 4 Vols. 12mo., Third Edition. Blackwood, Edinburgh: John Murray, London. 1817”’ in *The Quarterly Review*, Vol.XVI, (London; John Murray, October 1816 and January 1817), p. 432.

⁶⁴ ‘Waverley: Unsigned Review’ in *The British Critic*, ns.ii, (August 1814), pp. 189–211, in *Scott: The Critical Heritage*, pp. 71–72.

Let those who are engaged in forming the minds of the youth of this country not disdain to receive a hint even from the trifling pages of a novel, and let those who are placed under their care, as they value themselves and their best hopes, learn from the character of Waverley early to this trust that inordinate self-confidence, and that overbearing petulance, which teaches them to despise that order, that labour, and that discipline of the mind, which can alone secure to them full completion of their ambitious views. The most fatal enemies to the bright prospect of future distinction other ramblings of superficial enquiry, and the pride of conceited indolence.⁶⁵

Evidently, with *Waverley* and his founding of *The Quarterly Review*, Scott was reacting to the upheaval such an explosion of print culture throughout the early nineteenth century had in providing the public with a ‘sea of books,’ which may be dangerous to formative minds were they not directed. Waverley’s character, therefore, is an attempt to warn his readers of such perils and to provide them with a corrective fable. However, he also stands as the product of Scott’s own anxieties surrounding the ‘low’ or ‘feminine’ genre within which he himself was writing. Waverley (and his subsequent actions) is shaped by the reading of texts in which he finds solely pleasure, a charge levelled regularly against the novel.⁶⁶ By presenting such an educational example in a novel, Scott is thus attempting to demonstrate what a novel could be: equal to other worthy genres by being likewise pedagogic and self-aware of its important role in the forming of its readers’ minds. Scott thus saw himself, much like the reviewing journals of the day, as a guardian and arbiter for public tastes in literature: public tastes that Scott was anxious to incorporate into his new role as novelist.

Interpretation In *The Antiquary*

⁶⁵ Ibid., p. 72.

⁶⁶ Barbara Benedict explains that novels in the Romantic era were deliberately formulaic with similar or explanatory titles in order to comply with circulating libraries’ requirements for quick turnaround schedules for book returns. In comparison to poetry, such a reading practice to writers likely seemed trivial and, according to the genre conceptions of the day, led the novel to be viewed as a ‘lesser’ literature. See Barbara Benedict, ‘Sensibility By the Numbers: Austen’s Work As Regency Popular Fiction’ in *Janeites: Austen’s Disciples and Devotees*, ed. Deidre Lynch, (Princeton, NJ; Princeton University Press, 2000), pp. 63–86.

As early as his third novel, *The Antiquary*, Scott begins to demonstrate his newfound awareness of the growing power of his novel reading public. He does this by weaving into the fabric of his text a running commentary on the duties and responsibilities of writers in order to effectively engage with their audience. That is to say that Scott utilises certain characters to demonstrate the experience of authors and portrays scenes in which his characters interpret physical sights in different ways, mirroring (even sanctioning or inviting) his audience to interpret his texts in a similarly varied way. In doing so, Scott is acknowledging the enormous fluctuations amongst his audience and the different interpretations these will produce, much like Klancher's claim that audiences have 'interpretative tendencies' or 'ideological contours'.⁶⁷ He invites his readers to reflect on their own power to shape the text through their individual interpretations and demonstrates the fluid nature of composition in dialogue with an audience.

In Chapter Fourteen, for instance, upon discussing their joint plans for an epic poem together, Oldbuck tells Lovel that 'You must have the fear of the public before your eyes in all your undertakings.'⁶⁸ Whilst fear does not necessarily characterise Scott's relationship to his audience (but is apt for the outdated Oldbuck), the statement exemplifies that authors have a duty to consider audience response and interpretation. However, rather than fear such interpretation Scott celebrates it in *The Antiquary*. Tom Bragg identifies that in Chapter Seventeen all of the parties invited to view the ruins of St. Ruth's Abbey interpret the monument differently, which 'eventually gives way to the separate synopses of the tour party members, each supplying his or her own self-serving and biased interpretative framework for the scene's implied narrative'.⁶⁹ The ruins come to signify for Oldbuck a 'retreat of learning in the days of darkness', a sight for 'exercising the rites of devotion with a pomp and ceremonial worthy of the office of the priesthood' for Sir Arthur, duty for the Reverend Blattergowl, a sight to plunder or cause mischief for Dousterswivel, and a place excluded 'from womankind' for Isabella.⁷⁰ Bragg argues that such interpretations are undermined by Edie Ochiltree's local knowledge leading him to actually be the accurate reader of the ruins, since he knows of the secret tunnels in which he shelters Lovel later, and from which he emerges to thwart Dousterswivel's schemes.⁷¹ However, I would contend that Ochiltree's knowledge does

⁶⁷ Klancher, *The Making of English Reading Audiences*, p. 6.

⁶⁸ Scott, *The Antiquary*, p. 106.

⁶⁹ Tom Bragg, 'Scott's Elementals: Vanishing Points between Space and Narrative in the Waverley Novels' in *Studies in the Novel*, Volume 42, Number 3 (Fall 2010), pp. 205–226 (p. 213).

⁷⁰ See Bragg, p. 215; and Scott, *The Antiquary*, pp. 131, 132.

⁷¹ See Bragg, p. 215; and see Scott, *The Antiquary*, pp. 164–177, 194–201.

not detract from the others' interpretation of the ruins just because he knows them more intimately. Instead, Scott portrays a scene in which individual parties, divided by their own ideas and experiences, read the ruins in different ways, and, of which, none of them are demonstrably wrong (apart from Dousterswivel's dream of plunder). This is further bolstered by the narrator taking no active view himself on the ruins.

In doing so, Scott is presenting a site by which various parties are invited and authorised to speculate over a scene put before them, and, rather than have a narrator telling them what to think, he allows them to form their own opinions. Scott thus constructs a site in which audience interpretation, however varied it may be, is encouraged and embraced. However, this does not detract from the author's duty that he must consider or 'have the fear of the public' in their composition process. Returning to Bragg's work, he argues that the 'Kaim of Kinprunes' scene of Chapter Four, where Ochiltree and Oldbuck clash over their opinions of what Oldbuck labels an 'ancient [Roman] camp' and Ochiltree (with his local omniscience) labels a more recently constructed sight for a wedding celebration, represents an example of a poor reader of landscapes (Oldbuck) and a good one (Ochiltree).⁷² Tainted by his love of antiquity, Oldbuck views the scene through his own desires. I would contend, though, that this is more a commentary on writers than readers. After all, Oldbuck is guiding Lovel around his estate, dictating what he sees and how he sees it, much like a narrator or novelist. Ochiltree, though, offers an alternate view, untainted by his enthusiasm for antiquity. Steeped in the recent history of the locality and landscape due to his own position as mendicant, Edie is portrayed as likely the more accurate reader, though not necessarily an infallible one.⁷³

⁷² Bragg, pp. 211–212; and Scott, *The Antiquary*, pp. 28–34.

⁷³ St Clair also cites Scott in outlining his theory of reading by comparing it to a series of passengers on a train: 'Scott, for example, compared the reading of a long romantic poem to the experience of a passenger going on a journey in a coach. When the passengers look out of the window they all see the same main features, the mountains, the fields, the towns, but they see them at different angles and with individual expectations. The carriage from which they see the view is moving all the time, and, with it their mental states. The effect of the scenery is different if it is winter or summer, morning or evening, the passengers are hungry or tired or have had a glass of wine, if the company is congenial or boring. Some of the time of the passengers absorb the regarded scenery in silence; sometimes they talk about it, pointing out this or that feature, willing to be persuaded to new opinions, and always liable to be interrupted or side-tracked into new thoughts. Scott's reception model does not displace the 'implied reader' nor the 'critical reader', and accept, indeed requires, 'interpretative communities' who share common 'horizons of expectations' within the coach. Scott's model does grant autonomy to readers.' His presentation of the 'Kaim' of Chapter Four, and St Ruth's Abbey in Chapter Seventeen can thus be seen as Scott putting such an open and considerate theory of reception into practice in the formulation of his argument. See St Clair, *Reading Nation*, pp. 401–402.

Similarly, in Chapter Forty, Oldbuck overhears ‘the shrill tremulous voice of Elspeth chanting forth an old ballad in a wild and doleful recitative’ and being a ‘diligent collector of these legendary scraps of ancient poetry’ he listens and records the verses in his notebook. Upon hearing a line, Oldbuck remarks: “‘Chafron!’ exclaimed the Antiquary, —“equivalent, perhaps, to cheveron—the word’s worth a dollar,” —and down it went in his red book.’ Upon Elspeth halting her singing, Oldbuck wishes “‘she would resume that canticle, or legendary fragment—I always suspected there was a skirmish of cavalry before the main battle of the Harlaw.’”⁷⁴ In both instances, Oldbuck embellishes the tale he is telling: he creates a roman fort out of the sight of a wedding celebration, and alters Elspeth’s song from ‘Chafron’ to ‘cheveron’ as it seems to make more sense to him. He also uses her song to justify his own suspicions of a skirmish that had happened long ago. The novel then portrays two separate forms of composition in the characters of Oldbuck and Ochiltree. Oldbuck represents a process of embellishment whereby he, with an audience in mind, interprets, streamlines and mystifies history for the enjoyment of that audience. However, Ochiltree’s role is more complex. Whilst, on the surface, he appears to represent a more accurate portrayal of history regardless of audience enjoyment due to his position as local mendicant, his knowledge is not always infallible. Indeed, often his interventions are played for comic effect, as in the case of the Kaim where his interpretation is deliberately staged in front of Lovel, an audience, to deflate Oldbuck’s bold pronouncements of grand antiquity. Oldbuck thus pokes fun at Scott’s own composition process in his bumbling antiquarianism. However, in portraying historical scenes and songs accurately, whilst having a series of guides interpret them inaccurately but in an entertaining way, suggests that there is a compromise between the two forms of composition. Justifying his lack of precise historical detail later in the ‘Prefatory Letter From The Reverent Dryasdust Of York, To Captain Clutterbuck’ in *Peveril of the Peak* (1822), the author of *Waverley* tells Dryasdust that:

since we cannot rebuild the temple, a kiosk may be a pretty thing, may it not? not quite correct in architecture, strictly and classically criticized, but presenting something uncommon to the eye, and something fantastic to the imagination, on which the spectator gazes with pleasure of the same description which arises from the perusal of an Eastern tale.⁷⁵

⁷⁴ Scott, *The Antiquary*, pp. 311, 312.

⁷⁵ Sir Walter Scott, ‘Prefatory Letter From The Reverent Dryasdust Of York, To Captain Clutterbuck’ in *Peveril of the Peak*, ed. Alison Lumsden, (Edinburgh; Edinburgh University Press, 2007), pp. 8–9.

Whilst I shall explore Scott's use of history and personae more in Chapter Four, both this statement and the scenes described in *The Antiquary* justify Scott's novels as a compromise between historical accuracy and entertainment, manipulated and staged deliberately with an audience in mind. His audience do not want dry but accurate history any more than Lovel will be entertained by the recent remains of a barbecue or Oldbuck's audience by a song they would struggle to understand due to archaisms. Just as Oldbuck must consider audience and facts, so too must the author of *The Antiquary* by conducting his duty to entertain his audience and remain mostly faithful to the source material, with deviations where necessary to entertain.

Thus Scott acknowledges and encourages the various interpretations that his texts shall encounter upon contact with his enlarged and varied audience, but also acknowledges the duties he, as an author, has to entertain that audience whilst remaining as faithful as he can to his historical sources. Scott is thus keenly aware that his texts must exist in contact and dialogue with his audience, if they are to be successful. And that 'success' is not merely financial. The pleasure that both audience and reader takes in these acts of interpretation are at the heart of the creative method these novels self-consciously develop. His texts thus invite his readers to reflect on their own power to shape the text through reading and interpretation as well as the dubious, playful quality of any act of creation and interpretation. The 'ideological contours' and 'interpretative tendencies' of his audience, as Klancher identifies, are thus embraced by Scott as a creative influence upon his work and in his relationship with his public. This comes to a zenith when Scott develops and diversifies his personae with his writing of the *Tales Of My Landlord* in 1816 until his authorship is revealed in 1827.

Conclusion

Scott's composition of *Waverley* and *The Antiquary* was intrinsically linked to his conceptions of the newly formed Romantic reading public, leading Scott to a relationship with them based on acknowledging their emerging power and constituting the differences between constituencies of readers as central to the construction of his texts. Far from being the isolated author, Scott created a democratic composition process which prioritised the conceptions, desires, and ideas of his audiences (both represented by his correspondents and his own perceptions of the reading public) as the ultimate arbiter for the direction of his texts.

Consistent throughout Scott's career is his deference to his audience and, especially, an awareness of the great variety within that audience in the newly expanded reading public. In displaying the power his audience wield through diverse understandings of the novel (or of scenes), Scott thus invites his readers to reflect on their own power to shape the text through reading and interpretation as well as the dubious, playful quality of any act of creation and understanding. Scott's creative process, far from neglecting audience in a defensive posture (as his anonymity might suggest), offered an open invitation to his audience, encouraging them to consider their own thoughts and reactions to his texts during reading, and bidding them to enter into a creative dialogue with an author eager to engage with them.

Chapter Five: Scott's Years Of High Fame - *The Tales Of My Landlord* (1816) to *St. Ronan's Well* (1824)

In *The Antiquary*, Scott gracefully bowed out of novel writing, expressing his 'gratitude to the Public for the distinguished reception which they have given to works, that have little more than some truth of colouring to recommend them, and to take my respectful leave, as one who is not likely again to solicit their favour'.¹ Nevertheless, it would be just eight months before Scott sold the first instalment to his four volume novel of two stories, the *Tales Of My Landlord* (1816). Debuting under the persona of Jedediah Cleishbotham, Scott utilised a fluid identity to deftly negotiate the conditions of Romantic publishing culture. In doing so, Scott laid the foundations of a fictional world in which his personae (like Jedediah or the upcoming 'Author Of Waverley') could interact with and respond to Scott's audience via their crafted personalities, and in which his audience and Scott could playfully engage.

In this chapter, I shall outline how Scott created a playful, fictional world of authorship surrounding the tales of his Waverley novels in order to obscure his identity whilst offering his readership entertaining and responsive paratexts. This world was built by Scott's prefaces and introductory chapters which detailed, utilising personae, an imagined world of authorship. This world simultaneously interacted with events and characters from Scott's novels and the real conditions of Romantic literary culture. I shall demonstrate how these multiple levels of fiction were utilised by Scott, not only to entertain his audience, but to navigate the publishing industry, to obscure his own identity, and to playfully engage, provoke and respond to varied audiences and the shifting conditions of the marketplace. I shall contend that Scott's pseudonymity developed from his concerns surrounding the cultural status of the novel and novelists, an apparent decline from the more culturally celebrated poet.² Scott's paratexts, often celebrating entrepreneurship and capitalism's increasing role in the literary market, are thus the products of his own concerns with his proximity to such a world. Playing with his audience's impressions of that world, as well as their emboldened voices in a growing world of letters and reviews, Scott thus creates a space in which he can respond to the new culture of Romantic readerships and to his own concerns. By carving out space between himself and his audience through the use of fictional personae, I shall demonstrate how

¹ Scott, 'Advertisement' in *The Antiquary*, p. 3.

² Indeed, at one point, Scott was even offered the role of poet-laureate, but turned it down suggesting Southey instead.

Scott was creating a relationship to audience very different from either Byron or Landon.

Consequently, I shall build upon McGann's work on Scott's paratextual materials, which argue that Scott's writing of fictional prefaces urge 'his readers to attend to the artifice of the work before them'.³ That is to say that by reading a Waverley novel and its accompanying paratext, Scott's audience are made aware that what they are reading is a fiction built upon historical fact, written by an author who has equally built a fiction behind the novel's composition. By using previously unconsidered fan-mail found in the archives of the National Library of Scotland, and developing upon the useful work Mayer has conducted on Scott's relationship with fans, I shall demonstrate that Scott's audience bought into the game of authorship and mobile identity that he was playing, recognizing their own role in the creation of the texts and Scott's personae.⁴ I shall further contend that Scott's clever use of artificial personae also allowed him to wield an immense creative license in his works, independent of publishers' wishes, holding a significant degree of power over his primary publisher, Constable, and the publishers of the *Tales Of My Landlord*, John Murray and William Blackwood.

This chapter shall examine the period of 1816–1824 as this encompasses the development of Scott's fictional authorial world and represents the period in which Scott could most fully toy with his audience. 1816 saw the emergence of Cleishbotham as a fictional personae, a tactic Scott would utilise frequently throughout the period in his playful and facetious interactions with audience. However, into 1824, we see a creeping editorial intrusion from Scott's publishers and his printer, James Ballantyne, into the creation of his texts due to their own concerns and assessments over audience demands. In 1825, Constable and Ballantyne's businesses were both brought to their knees, ending Scott's long period of play and forcing him to reveal his identity in *The Chronicles Of The Canongate* in 1827. Therefore, I shall engage with this long period of playful world creation, before detailing the increasingly restrictive effects editorial intervention and the 1825 crash in the literary market played in Scott's later works in Chapter Six. Throughout, I shall attempt to demonstrate how Scott's novels and prefaces were the result of a unique but poly-vocal model of authorship, incorporating direct intervention from editors and publishers alike, whilst also being intensely fascinated by the idea and effects of a large, vibrant readership.

³ McGann, 'Walter Scott's Postmodernity', p. 121.

⁴ Mayer, *Walter Scott And Fame*.

Jedediah Cleishbotham: Playing With Audiences And Editors

On Scott's latest release, *The Critical Review* speculated:

It is impossible to read the first sheet of this production without a conviction that it is by the author of *Waverley*, *Guy Mannering*, and *The Antiquary*, though the title page gives us no such information. It is not difficult to conjecture why it should have been omitted when we recollect the concluding sentence of the preface to *The Antiquary*, in which the writer took leave of the public 'as one not likely soon to trouble it again'. Eight months, however, are scarcely elapsed before he once more introduces himself to notice in four volumes of the *Tales Of My Landlord*.⁵

The review was correct, but it was not a difficult guess. Scott had made his disguise deliberately thin. Relaying historical tales from Gandercleugh, 'the navel (si fas sit dicere) of this our native realm of Scotland', with a similar joviality to *Waverley*'s narrator, Jedediah was deliberately constructing a connection to Scott's previous Scotch novels.⁶ Jedediah, telling the two stories (*The Black Dwarf*, published in volume one, and *Old Mortality*, published in the other three) of his now dead, but fictional, landlord, Peter Pattieson, was a persona designed by Scott so that he could simultaneously play with his audience in the creation of mobile fictions, maintain his word that *Waverley*'s author would not 'soon trouble [his audience] again', and manipulate the conditions of Romantic literary culture by switching publishers to gain leverage over them and greater profits for himself. Whilst I shall detail the ways Scott achieved this, I shall begin with how Scott utilised the Landlord series to not, strictly, betray Constable, whilst negotiating a stronger position for himself in the writer–publisher dynamic by switching to Murray and Blackwood as publishers. I shall also demonstrate how Scott utilised his still existent anonymity as the author of *Waverley* to engage playfully and creatively with them too.

⁵ 'Unsigned Review: The Tales Of My Landlord' in *Critical Review*, 5th Series, IV, (December 1816), pp. 614–25, in *Scott: The Critical Heritage*, p. 106.

⁶ Sir Walter Scott, 'Introduction' in *The Black Dwarf*, ed. P.D. Garside, (Edinburgh; Edinburgh University Press, 1993), p. 5.

Writing to John Ballantyne in 1814, Scott urged him to hawk his potential novels to alternative publishers, ‘letting them have [a] scent of roast meat’ in order to negotiate better terms for himself.⁷ Whilst Constable was still party to any novels by the ‘author of *Waverley*’, Scott was already considering using the leverage his success and his anonymity had provided him towards those who published his works. In 1816, he would give William Blackwood his ‘scent of roast meat’ by having John negotiate the rights to publish the *Tales Of My Landlord* for Scott’s usual terms of half-profits and £600 worth of Ballantyne and Co.’s useless stock.⁸ Whilst asking Ballantyne if the author of these tales was the same as *Waverley*’s, and being met with the response that John ‘was not at liberty to mention its title, nor was he at liberty to give the author’s name’, Ballantyne deduced from those terms that it was written by the same man, likely Scott. Excitedly writing to his London partner, Murray, who would publish the tales in England, Blackwood told him that in securing Scott from Constable, ‘I have been occupied with this for years, and I hope I have now accomplished what will be of immense service to us’.⁹ Whilst profitable for Blackwood and Murray, the advantages for Scott were evident. William G. Rowland characterises the alteration between the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries as one in which, previously, writers collaborated with patrons, and, in the nineteenth, authors clamoured to collaborate with great publishers. Not only was Murray a more financially sound publisher than Constable, but he was also Scott’s partner in *The Quarterly Review* and, in Murray’s own words, ‘in the habit of seeing persons of the highest rank in literature and talent’ like ‘Southey, Campbell, Walter Scott, Madame De Staël’ and, obviously, ‘Byron’; ‘thus leading the most delightful life, with means of prosecuting my business in the highest honour and emolument’.¹⁰ These connections would clearly benefit Scott compared to his current arrangement, and, as he composed

⁷ Scott wrote that ‘My idea is, that you or James should write to them to the following effect:—That a novel is offered you by the Author of *Waverley*; that the Author is desirous it should be out before Mr. Scott’s poem, or as soon thereafter as possible; and that having resolved, as they are aware, to relinquish publishing, you only wish to avail yourselves of this offer to the extent of helping off some of your stock. I leave it to you to consider whether you should condescend on any particular work to offer them as bread to their butter—or on any particular amount—as £500. One thing must be provided, that Constable shares to the extent of the Scottish sale—they, however, managing. My reason for letting them have this scent of roast meat is, in case it should be necessary for us to apply to them to renew bills in December.’ See Scott, ‘To John Ballantyne, 14 October 1814’ in *The Letters of Sir Walter Scott*, vol. 3, pp. 505–506.

⁸ P.D. Garside, ‘Essay On The Text’ in Scott, *The Black Dwarf*, pp. 125–126.

⁹ Quoted in *Ibid.*, p. 126.

¹⁰ Quoted in Frank Arthur Mumby, *Publishing and Bookselling*, 5th edition, (London, Johnathon Cape, 1974), p. 191.

the tales as a separate series, Scott could not be accused of deserting Constable, leaving a future partnership open.

Whilst switching publishers, though, Scott maintained the model of authorship that he had with Constable whereby his publishers did not know his identity and the novel was printed by Ballantyne before they had seen the text. Scott was thus in control of the entire process with the publishers' hopes of success based only on the previous novel's performance.¹¹ Indeed, this explains Blackwood's and Murray's lack of input into *The Black Dwarf's* direction. Scott lost interest in the novel before it was finished, admitting to Lady Louisa Stuart that he had 'bungled up a conclusion as a boarding school Miss finishes a task in which she had commenced with great gall and accuracy'.¹² The novella fizzles out with the dwarf, in a spasm of deus ex machina, improbably revealed as a missing aristocrat who solves the tale's problems through observation. In accordance with his role as publisher, Blackwood, requested the ending be revised.¹³ Blackwood received this outburst:

My respects to the Booksellers & I belong to the Death-head Hussars of literature who neither *take* nor *give* criticism. I know no business they had to show my work to Gifford nor would I cancel a leaf to please all the critics of Edinburgh & London.¹⁴

Ballantyne's input in *Waverley* shows Scott could accept criticism: it merely depended upon its source. Garside also illuminates that, in a set up whereby the text was printed before Blackwood's readings, revisions of the ending would have been too much work, especially since, by this point, Scott was heavily invested in writing the second tale: *Old Mortality*.¹⁵

However, to suggest Scott's relationship with Murray and Blackwood was char-

¹¹ As I have mentioned, as a partner in Ballantyne and Co., the printers of all of the Waverley novels, Scott directed what was and was not printed. James Ballantyne offered guidance, and whilst this was often heeded even without necessary authorisation on the author's part, Scott could have turned it down.

¹² Scott, 'To Lady Louisa Stuart, 14 November 1816' in *The Letters of Sir Walter Scott*, vol. 4, p. 293.

¹³ This was at the advice of Blackwood and Murray's editorial advisor, William Gifford, the same man who had helped edit Byron's poetry.

¹⁴ Scott, 'To James Ballantyne, 3 October 1816' in *The Letters of Sir Walter Scott*, vol. 4, p. 76.

¹⁵ P.D. Garside, 'Essay On The Text' in Scott, *The Black Dwarf*, p. 134.

acterised by bullying from a strong authorial position is inaccurate. Actually, by utilising anonymity towards his publishers, Scott could include those relationships as part of the creative process, producing texts that directly responded to and engaged with the fluctuations entailed by such tenuous connections. Indeed, his editors indulged and enjoyed Scott's game. Upon publishing the tales, for instance, Blackwood posted two copies of them through Ballantyne for 'the author', despite having already posted Scott directly 'the very first copy'.¹⁶ Likewise, after the tales' success, Murray wrote to Scott directly, stating:

Although I dare not address you as the author of certain "Tales" which however must be written either by Walter Scott or the Devil, yet, nothing can restrain me from thinking that it is to your influence with the Author of them that I am indebted for the essential honour of being one of their publishers, and I must [impress] upon you to offer my most hearty thanks—not divided but doubled [alike] for my worldly gain therein and for all the great acquisition of professional reputation which their publication has already procured me.¹⁷

Suspecting Scott, Murray cheekily writes to him in order to express his gratitude for the mutually beneficial partnership they had (or, perhaps, had not) built. Scott replied by stating:

I give you heartily joy of the success of the *Tales*, although I do not claim that paternal interest in them which my friends do me the credit to assign me. I assure you I have never read a volume of them till they were printed, and can only join with the rest of the world in applauding the true and striking portraits which they present of old Scottish manners.

In order to prove his innocence, Scott offered to review 'the work, which I take to be an operation similar to the experiment of quartering the child'.¹⁸ Scott's switch of publishers was afforded to him by his initial anonymity, new pseudonymity, and a change in

¹⁶ By posting the very first copy to Scott before the anonymous 'author', Blackwood was cheekily highlighting to Scott that he knew his identity, but would indulge his game by posting other copies to the 'unknown' author. See *Ibid.*, p. 135.

¹⁷ 'John Murray to Scott, 14 December 1816' in NLS, MS.3887, pp. 141–142.

¹⁸ In an attempt to throw Murray off the trail, Scott explains 'I do not expect implicit reliance to be placed on my disavowal, because I know very well that he who is resolved not to own a work

series. 'Jedediah' allowed Scott the space between himself and his publishers to both toy with them, and to wield a greater share of power in contract negotiations as well as over their editorial input. As we shall see, this switch to Murray and Blackwood over Constable was a threat that would shape Scott and Constable's future collaboration despite no other defection taking place. This was due to Scott's unhappiness with Blackwood's demands over *The Black Dwarf*'s conclusion.

As mentioned, Scott's use of Jedediah in the first series of *The Tales Of My Landlord* allowed him to play with his audience in more complex ways than *Waverley*'s anonymity. In his letter to Murray, Scott promises to 'quarter' the tales. John Sutherland describes Scott as 'the completest of authors. He could write his books, publish his books, print his books, sell his books and—if he was daring enough—review (or have friends review) his books in *his* journal.' This was because Scott wrote the texts, printed the texts with Ballantyne, held power over his publishers, and was partner in *The Quarterly*. As Sutherland states, 'In the abstract one can see Scott's 1809 activities as a fascinating experiment in professional writing. He had closed all the gaps—or "gateways"—across which literature habitually jumped or fell.'¹⁹ Indeed, he did just that, declaring *The Black Dwarf* as 'even more than usually deficient in the requisites of a luminous and interesting narrative', improbable, and abounding 'with plots, elopements, ravishments, and rescues, and all the violent events which are so common in romance, and of such rare occurrence in real life', and that the conclusion 'is only worthy of the farce of the Miller And His Men, or any other modern melo-drama, ending with a front crowded with soldiers and scene-shifters, and a back scene in a state of conflagration'.²⁰ Whilst Scott's review of *The Tales* in *The Quarterly* was a part of Scott's game with Murray designed to maintain his secret, they are also part of the game Scott was playing with his audience. David Stewart identifies that part of the entertainment for Romantic reviewers' audiences lay in the slashing style whereby 'insults are offered to be enjoyed by the public, and even by those attacked'.²¹ Scott's review was anonymous in *The*

must necessarily deny it, and that otherwise his secret would be at the mercy of all who chose to ask the question, since silence in such a case must always pass for consent, or rather assent. But I have a mode of convincing you that I am perfectly serious in my denial—pretty similar to that by which Solomon distinguished the fictitious from the real mother—and that is, by reviewing the work, which I take to be an operation similar to the experiment of quartering the child.' See Scott, 'To John Murray, 18 December 1816' in *The Letters of Sir Walter Scott*, vol. 4, p. 318.

¹⁹ Sutherland, p. 139.

²⁰ Such a review echoes closely Scott's comments to Lady Louisa Stuart in which he admitted that he had 'bungled' the novella's conclusion, a similarity she may well have noticed. See Scott, "'Walter Scott: An Unsigned Review'" in *The Quarterly Review*, April 1817, XVI, pp. 430–80, quoted in *Scott: The Critical Heritage*, p. 120.

²¹ Stewart, *Romantic Magazines and Metropolitan Literary Culture*, p. 66.

Quarterly, as was standard. By attacking his own work anonymously, Scott is once again demonstrating his flexible use of personae to play with his audience. This play, though, is evidently in response to Scott's own concerns over how his audience, and himself, have viewed the apparently deficient *Black Dwarf*. With *The Black Dwarf* potentially failing to capture Scott's audience, Scott's whole novel-writing endeavour was at risk. Thus, Scott's alternative persona in the alternative medium of *The Quarterly* was playfully employed in the rescue. In his review Scott states:

These tales belong obviously to make lots of novels which we have already had occasion repeatedly to notice, and which have attracted the attention of the public in no common degree,—we mean *Waverley*, *Guy Mannering*, and *The Antiquary*, and we have little hesitation to pronounce them either entirely, or in a great measure, the work of the same author.²²

Scott's anonymous persona in *The Quarterly* thus pretends to make the observation that the equally 'independent' persona of *Waverley*'s author is the same as the fictional 'Jedediah'. Scott's review, then, acts as a paratext to his novels which helps to build a fictional world, in which his identity is constantly mobile, and in which his audience meets Scott regularly without knowing it to be him, but constantly speculates over his identity nonetheless. Readers frequently questioned the authorship of articles in *The Quarterly* and *The Edinburgh*, especially by celebrity authors like Gifford, Southey, Jeffrey, or Brougham.²³ Scott, in this respect (although employing multiple mediums), was no different.

Similarly, in a letter to Joseph Train, Scott links *Waverley*'s author to Jedediah, despite knowing that they are both the person currently writing that letter:

The novel in which he appears belongs to the same cycle and appears to be written by the same author as those of *Waverley* and *Guy Mannering*, and displays the same knowledge of Scottish manners and scenery and the same care-

²² Scott, "'Walter Scott: An Unsigned Review'" in *The Quarterly Review*, p. 113.

²³ For more on why readers read reviews and magazines, including their speculation over contributors' identities, see Kim Wheatley, *Romantic Feuds: Transcending The "Age Of Personality"*, (Farnham, Surrey; Ashgate Publishing, 2013); Cutmore, 'A Plurality of Voices in the Quarterly Review', in *Conservatism and the Quarterly Review*, pp. 61–86; and Stewart, 'The Examiner, Robert Southey's Print Celebrity and the Marketing of *The Quarterly Review*'.

lessness as to arrangement of the story which characterize these curious narratives. Why the author should conceal himself, and in this case even change his publishers as if to insure his remaining concealed is a curious problem. I get the credit of them and wish I deserved it but I dare say the real author will one day appear.²⁴

His letter skips casually over the reasons why Scott changed publisher, but it also acts as another example of Scott utilising his persona to obscure his own identity, play with hints, and thus toy with those readers amongst his audience fascinated by Scott's fluid use of identity. He does not *quite* deny his authorship, and one senses that he enjoys the opportunity to keep his correspondents guessing.

Consequently, 'Jedediah Cleishbotham' represents an intersection for Scott between the material reality of dealing with publishers, and his game of mobile identity and truth he played with his audience. Cleishbotham, and Scott's subsequent correspondence and review, demonstrates an author revelling in the boundaries anonymity and pseudonymity allow, the multiple literary media available, and the conditions of reception and literary culture at the time, in order to play with an audience and publishers. However, whilst Scott seems to enjoy such play, it is the product of his own anxieties surrounding the reception of *The Black Dwarf* and its reflection upon himself or, rather, the success of his novel-writing. Scott thus utilises his audience, as well as the media available via the enlarged print market of the era, as part of his self-fashioning and composition. The fact that his audience kept writing to Scott about the mystery behind these personae suggests they were increasingly fascinated by his manoeuvres. As we shall see, these get more elaborate as his career advances.

The Historical Novel As Justification

As Chapter Four mentioned, one of the justifications Scott promoted for reading his novels (and one his audience evidently agreed with) was the historical knowledge that they imparted. Ina Ferris, in *The Achievement of Literary Authority: Gender, History, and the Waverley Novels* (1991), persuasively argues that Scott 'masculinised' the novel by creating (as Scott described it) the 'historical romance' which 'added the authority of a very specific kind of male writing', historiography, by incorporating in his tales of the

²⁴ Scott, 'To Joseph Train, 21 December 1816' in *The Letters of Sir Walter Scott*, vol. 4, p. 323.

past ‘fact and accuracy’, thus ‘validat[ing] novel reading as a male practice’ and ‘mov[ing] the novel out of the subliterate margins of the culture into the literary hierarchy’.²⁵ Accordingly, the ‘validation effected by *Waverley* and its successors depended crucially on their appropriation of history’.²⁶ Scott thus not only made his novels acceptable for female readers as novels, but also extended his audience to men by suggesting that the novels were *really* histories.

This is exemplified by Francis Jeffrey’s review of *Waverley* when he states ‘the work before us, was evidently to present a faithful and animated picture of the manners and state of society that prevailed in this northern part of the island in the earlier part of the last century’ and that ‘the way in which they are here represented must satisfy every reader, we think, by an inward *tact* and conviction, that the delineation has been made from actual experience and observation’.²⁷ Apparently, *Waverley* is a worthy text of study as it is a product of studious ‘observation’ of historical documents and thus a ‘faithful’ representation history.²⁸

Thomas Love Peacock summarised this in 1818, when he suggests that the author of *Waverley*:

is far from being a writer who teaches nothing. On the contrary, he communicates fresh and valuable information. He is the historian of a peculiar and a minute class of our own countrymen who, within a few years, have completely passed away. He offers materials to the philosopher in depicting, with the truth of life, the features of human nature in a peculiar state of society before comparatively little known.²⁹

²⁵ Ferris, pp. 7, 8.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 8.

²⁷ Francis Jeffrey, ‘Review of *Waverley*’ in *The Edinburgh Review*, November 1814, XXIV, pp. 208–243 in *Scott: The Critical Heritage*, pp. 80, 81.

²⁸ Similarly, reviewing *The Antiquary*, John Wilson Croker, in *The Quarterly*, recommended it as worthy of reading by the ‘moralist and the antiquary’ as ‘it is impossible to read it without feeling the highest respect for the talents, both gay and pathetic, of the author, for the bold impartiality of his national delineations, and for the taste and discrimination with which he has rescued, from the overwhelming march of time and change of manners, these historical representations of a state of society’. The value of a ‘masculinised’ novel to educate readers was seemingly universally valued. See John Wilson Croker, “Review Of The Antiquary” in *The Quarterly Review*, April 1816 (issued August 1816), XV, pp. 125–39, in *Scott: The Critical Heritage*, p. 103.

²⁹ Thomas Love Peacock, ‘Thomas Love Peacock In A Serious Mood 1818’—‘An Essay On Fashionable Literature’ (1818) (Unpublished)—extract from A.B Young’s ‘T.L. Peacock’s “Essays On Fashionable Literature”’, *Notes And Queries*, II 2nd Series (2 July 1910), pp. 4–5, II 2nd Series (23 July 1910), pp. 62–63, quoted in *Scott: The Critical Heritage*, p. 145.

These statements, styling novels as acceptable reading, were the product of Scott's intentions, as Ferris accurately argues. The first three Waverley novels were, according to their anonymous author, written to faithfully 'illustrate the manners of Scotland in three different periods' and the first, *Waverley*, is said to 'really boast a tolerably faithful portrait of Scottish manners'.³⁰ Such opinions and Scott's suggestions thus help to explain why, as St Clair demonstrates, the Waverley novels were often the only fiction admitted to British learned or philosophical societies' libraries when novels were explicitly banned.³¹

Scott, in his preface to *The Monastery* (1820), states to the reader that the novel is directly based on a sixteenth-century manuscript discovered by Captain Clutterbuck and a Benedictine monk whilst excavating Melrose Abbey.³² I highlight *The Monastery*'s preface for an important reason. Borrowing the 'found manuscript topos' of the gothic genre, Scott intends his audience to read the novel as built upon an antique manuscript, suggesting its historical accuracy. However, it was discovered by a 'Captain Clutterbuck', a supposedly ex-soldier turned antiquarian. Scott is thus borrowing the topos of a supposedly 'feminine' genre (the gothic), then 'masculinising' it (as Ferris argues) by adding the gravity of an antiquarian as its discoverer. Cronin's assertion that Scott is 'cross-dressing the novel', though, is actually a more accurate term here.³³ In *Peperil of The Peak* (1822), Scott explicitly reveals that Clutterbuck is actively part of his game with audience as yet another personae that he has created, not a reliable source for historical manuscripts. In the novel's 'Prefatory Letter From The Reverend Dryadust Of York, To Captain Clutterbuck', Clutterbuck refers to the author of Waverley as 'our father and patron', revealing to the audience that he is the imaginary offspring of the author of *Waverley*, the overarching patron of the series.³⁴ Another such game is played in *Ivanhoe* (1820), when Lawrence Templeton (the fictional author and another of Scott's authorial personae) reveals that the principal historical manuscript this novel is based

³⁰ Scott, 'Advertisement' in *The Antiquary*, p. 3; and 'To John B.S. Morritt, 28 July 1814' in *The Letters of Sir Walter Scott*, vol. 3 p. 478.

³¹ St Clair, *Reading Nation*, p. 236.

³² See Sir Walter Scott, 'Introductory Epistle From Captain Clutterbuck Of His Majesty's—Regiment Of Infantry. To The Author Of Waverley' in *The Monastery*, ed. Penny Fielding, (Edinburgh; Edinburgh University Press, 2000), pp. 3–23.

³³ See Cronin, *Paper Pellets*, pp. 204–212.

³⁴ Scott, 'Prefatory Letter From The Reverend Dryadust Of York, To Captain Clutterbuck' in *Peperil of the Peak*, p. 14.

upon is the 'Anglo-Norman MS., which Sir Arthur Wardour preserves'.³⁵ Scott readers will immediately recognise that the manuscript is thus the property of Sir Arthur, Scott's character from the earlier *The Antiquary*. Scott's authorial persona Templeton (existing in one realm of fiction) gets his historical sources from another realm of fiction (characters from Scott's actual novels).

The preface to *Ivanhoe* represents an intersection in which Scott's multiple mobile personae and loose sense of the truth combine to play with the very real audience's perceptions of the Waverley novels as historically accurate. His anxieties over the role of himself as a novelist are manifested in the overtly masculine antiquarians with whom the author of Waverley 'converses' about historiography (and of which he is himself), although he leaves them deliberately unreliable and of one 'father' as a signifier to his audience that he, and they, are part of a self-conscious game in which the author (and, evidently, his anxieties) exists at the centre of a web of interacting influences upon the novel's construction that include the audience themselves. The 'feminine' suppositions of the novel genre may have driven Scott to masculinise the gothic topos of the found manuscript, yet it is also audience engagement and enjoyment that has influenced Scott (a sort of parading and manipulating of his own anxieties) to invite his audience into the knowing game of authorial personae. By dressing up in costumes, Scott is aware that he is 'cross-dressing the novel', and he lets his audience know it. Such play, then, develops from Scott's own concerns that he was 'trained under female discipline' in writing novels, and his desire to include his audience as a self-conscious, responsive, partner in the creation of his texts. *Ivanhoe* may be based on a real manuscript, but it is certainly not the property of Arthur Wardour, and not transcribed into a novel by Templeton, but rather the creation of a highly successful, professional, and engaging author.

In his 'Prefatory Letter' between Clutterbuck from Dryasdust in *Peperil of The Peak*, in response to criticism that his novels are not historically accurate (particularly in relation to *Old Mortality*'s representation of the Covenanter cause), Scott justifies such flaws and his game with audience in that:

I rather hope that I have turned the attention of the public on various points, which have received elucidation from writers of more learning and research, in consequence of my novels having attached some interest to them. I might give

³⁵ Sir Walter Scott, 'Dedicatory Epistle To The Rev. Dr Dryasdust, F.A.S. Residing In The Castle Gate, York.' in *Ivanhoe*, ed. Graham Tulloch, (Edinburgh; Edinburgh University Press, 1998), p. 12.

instances—but I hate vanity—I hate vanity. The history of the divining rod is well known—it is a slight valueless twig in itself, but indicates, by its motion, where veins of precious metal are concealed below the earth, which afterwards in which the adventurers by whom and they are laboriously and carefully wrought. I claim no more merit for my historical hints, but this is something.³⁶

Scott thus does not provide historical truth, but only a ‘divining rod’ to guide readers loosely in the direction of historical fact. It is the duty of readers to provide accuracy through their own research. He elaborates, when accused by Dryasdust that young people rely on his texts for historical learning, that:

by introducing the busy and the youthful to “truths severe in fairy fiction dressed,” I am doing a real service to the more ingenious and the more apt among them; for the love of knowledge wants but a beginning—the least spark will give fire when the train is properly prepared; and having been interested in fictitious adventures, ascribed to a historical period and characters, the reader begins next to be anxious to learn what the facts really were, and how far the novelist has justly represented them.³⁷

Scott thus suggests that his novels are only to guide readers, young and old, towards the ‘masculine’ study of history, and thus should not be expected as entirely accurate. They exist merely to guide readers to more accurate historiography.

However, Scott is also playing a deeper game with the various types of readers within his audience here. Whilst he is suggesting some readers will gain a love of masculine historiography, he also celebrates those readers who pursue the very opposite: the frivolous joy of reading novels. For example, in the ‘Introductory Epistle. Captain Cluttbuck To The Rev. Dryasdust’ of *The Fortunes of Nigel* (1822), Scott suggests that to stick entirely to historical accuracy, without creative license, would be, to him and to his audience, ‘dull and gloomy’ and like ‘the dog in a wheel, condemned to go round and

³⁶ See Scott, ‘Prefatory Letter’ in *Peveril of the Peak*, p. 10; and for discussions of the Covenanter controversy surrounding *The Tale of Old Mortality*, see Kyoko Takanashi, ‘Circulation, Monuments, and the Politics of Transmission in Sir Walter Scott’s Tales of My Landlord’ in *ELH*, Vol. 79, Number 2, (Summer 2012), pp. 289–314; Ferris, pp. 137–160.

³⁷ Scott, ‘Prefatory Letter’ in *Peveril of the Peak*, pp. 10–11.

round for hours'.³⁸ Such a text would also be as 'dull' for his audience too. Such instances of Scott acknowledging his novel reading audience (as opposed to seeking historiography) can be found in frequent concessions Scott's narrators make throughout the novels, as in *Redgauntlet* (1824) when Scott acknowledges that some of his readers, having 'formed somewhat approaching to a distinct idea of the principal characters who have appeared before him during the last volume', may wish to partake in 'the laudable practice of skipping', a practice the narrator confesses himself partial to.³⁹ Thus, whilst Scott's narrators respond defensively to some accusations that his novels are not historically accurate by framing them as a gateway to historiography, his games of authorial identity (signifying to his audience that his fictional antiquarians are all the same man) and his narrator's asides celebrating various reading styles undercut such pedagogic readings, opening his novels to all kinds of readers. In doing so, Scott is openly acknowledging the various types of readers and reading tendencies throughout his audience, and fitting them pointedly and self-consciously into his novels' compositions.

In one example of anonymous fan mail to Scott at the National Library Of Scotland, 'P.P.' evidently agrees with Scott's defence:

That the author of Waverley possesses in a greater degree than almost any writer ancient or modern the most valuable of all talents—that of translating into the language & accommodating to the intellectual habits of the people, those principles of moral & political science the knowledge of which has been hitherto confined to the learned—is beyond a doubt; and he is under the strictest moral obligation to employ these talents in defending the public institutions of his country and [?] her erring population. This duty must be performed, not in the way in which it can be performed by others, but by the application of those popular talents which are peculiar to himself.⁴⁰

Scott's 'popular talents' of novel writing, combined and balanced against those of 'translating into the language & accommodating to the intellectual habits of the people' 'learned' history, is evidently appreciated by 'P.P.' and Scott's reviewers as a moral service to Britain. However, whilst apparently viewed as a laudable practice by 'P.P.' for

³⁸ Sir Walter Scott, 'Introductory Epistle. Captain Clutterbuck To The Rev. Dryasdust' in *The Fortunes of Nigel*, ed. Frank Jordan, (Edinburgh; Edinburgh University Press, 2004), p. 10.

³⁹ Sir Walter Scott, *Redgauntlet*, ed. G.A.M. Wood and David Hewitt, (Edinburgh; Edinburgh University Press, 1997), p. 126.

⁴⁰ "'P.P.'" to "The Author Of Waverley" in NLS, MS.3890, pp. 278–280.

the betterment of Britain, it is also the result of Scott's negotiations with the implications of historical novel writing in the Romantic period, his own popularity, and an age defined by a new culture of readerships.

In inviting his audiences into the game of personae and mobile truth he had constructed, Scott allowed them the pleasure of, as Richard Maxwell states, seeing themselves as 'apprentices to "The Wizard of the North,"' both 'learned enquirers into traces of the past' and, as I would argue, engaged, creative partners in Scott's game and the construction of his novels.⁴¹ Scott's defensive gesture of justifying his novels as gateways to history, as well as his open celebration of frivolous novel readers, demonstrate that Scott was aware of the vastness and variety of his audience, and accepted all readers as central creative drivers in his novels' creation. Mayer highlights that fans 'are not just passive entities in a cultural field; rather, in appropriating cultural productions (poems and novels in Scott's day, movies and television programs later) and producers (writers, stars) fans *make* something of them. What is produced by fans through their relations with celebrities is meaning'.⁴² As I shall demonstrate, fans make something of Scott's personae, but this is an instance in which they (with Scott's permission) 'make meaning' from his novels. Much like Oldbuck and other readers of the landscape of the abbey in *The Antiquary*, Scott's presentation of history and his acknowledgement of various readings is designed to make the novels accessible to a varied audience by incorporating something for everyone.

Jedediah Cleishbotham: Playing With Audience Perceptions

Scott clearly enjoyed the possibilities that his playful interaction with his audience gave him. This interaction found its way into the personalities of the fictional 'authors' that he created. This is nowhere better demonstrated than with Jedediah Cleishbotham. Jedediah, and the *Tales Of My Landlord*, stand as examples of where Scott is deliberately, as McGann outlines, 'urging his readers to attend to the artifice of the work before them'.⁴³ He does this by deliberately playing with the bases of why the Waverley novels were widely accepted as worthy of both male and female, educated consideration: that they straddle both historiography and the traditional conception of novels. In fact, *The Tales*

⁴¹ Richard Maxwell, 'The Historical Novel' in *The Cambridge Companion to Fiction in the Romantic Period*, ed. Richard Maxwell and Katie Trumpener, (Cambridge; Cambridge University Press, 2008), p. 78.

⁴² Mayer, *Walter Scott*, pp. 140–141.

⁴³ McGann, 'Walter Scott's Postmodernity', p. 121.

Of My Landlord work to frustrate both types of readers' ideas that Scott's novels are historically accurate or purely the light entertainment of a 'feminine' novel in order to allow himself more creative freedom and to acknowledge readers of both tendencies in the creative process.

Kyoko Takanashi identifies that 'Jedediah Cleishbotham, the fictitious editor of *Tales of My Landlord*, presents himself as an armchair traveler. Having spent the last forty years sitting "in the leathern armchair, on the left-hand side of the fire, in the common room of the Wallace Inn, winter and summer, for every evening in my life," Cleishbotham claims that he has "seen more of the manners and customs of various tribes and people, than if [he] had sought them out by [his] own painful travel and bodily labour."⁴⁴ Whilst Takanashi argues that Cleishbotham's knowledge of history is thus a product of increasingly advanced methods of transmission in the period, I would contend that Scott's construction of him is to instead play with his audience's expectations in order to invite various different readers into the composition process, much like Oldbuck in *The Antiquary*. Cleishbotham claims that his historical knowledge develops sufficiently from staying stationary like a 'tollman at the well-frequented turnpike'.⁴⁵ However, Cleishbotham's verbosity and amusing, archaic character is deliberately built as an example of a narrator not to be trusted entirely. Indeed, whilst building the elaborate tale of stories handed down from a dead landlord, Cleishbotham goes out of his way to distance himself from the repercussions of his tales:

I will let those critics know, to their own eternal shame and confusion, as well as to the abashment and discomfiture of all who shall rashly take up a song against me, that I am NOT the writer, redactor, or compiler of the Tales of my Landlord; nor am I, in one single iota, answerable for their contents, more or less. And now, ye generation of vipers, who raise yourselves up as if it were brazen serpents, to hiss with your tongues, and to smite with your stings, bow yourselves down to your native dust, and acknowledge that yours have been the thoughts of ignorance, and the words of vain foolishness. Lo! ye are caught in your own snare, and your own pit hath yawned for you.⁴⁶

⁴⁴ Takanashi, pp. 290–291; and Scott, 'Introduction' in *The Black Dwarf*, p. 5.

⁴⁵ Scott, 'Introduction' in *The Black Dwarf*, p. 5.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 6.

His verbose attack on critics, preconditioning that their responses to his work will be meaningless as the work is not his, also acts to frame Jedediah as a slightly ludicrous character, throwing doubt on his assertion that he has ‘seen more of the manners and customs of various tribes and people, than if [he] had sought them out by [his] own painful travel and bodily labour.’ If he were so confident of his historical knowledge, why not stand by the tales he is transmitting, even if they were delivered to him by his landlord? Of course, since Jedediah and his Landlord, Peter Pattieson, are equally a fictional product of Scott’s imagination, this shifting of identity and consequence is even more complex than Jedediah’s bravado suggests. With such a move, Scott is also distancing himself from any claim that the tales to follow are entirely historically accurate as they are, rather, the tales of an unresponsive landlord transmitted through an unreliable, flamboyant source, both of whom never actually existed.⁴⁷ Whilst obscuring his identity through mobility, Scott is also blurring the provenance of his tales, allowing him the flexibility to offer up entertainment through playful personae such as Jedediah, and the creativity allowed by a non-historically accurate text.

However, that is not to say that the tales told by Jedediah are completely fabricated either. Indeed, in *Old Mortality*, Scott counterbalances the idea that the tales can be just considered as a standard Romantic novel by denying his readers a conventional novelistic ending. In her essay on Jane Austen, Barbara Benedict demonstrates how the lending libraries of the period dictated that novels should be ‘interchangeable rather than unique’ in that they provided relatively similar and unchallenging plots with conventional endings that all sewed up the happenings of the novel’s events neatly. She explains that this was due to novels being primarily read in lending libraries, and consequently the turnaround for book returns being necessarily tight.⁴⁸ Takanashi points out that in the conversation at the end of the novel between Peter Pattieson and Miss Buskbody in *Old Mortality*, Scott deliberately frustrates such ideas about novels that his readership largely held. Buskbody thus embodies the exact reading trends and expectations that Benedict identifies as permeating typical Romantic novels (‘interchangeable rather than unique’ novels). Directly citing Buskbody’s ‘experience which she must

⁴⁷ For more discussion of Jedediah Cleishbotham as an unreliable source, see Mayer, ‘The Illogical Status of Novelistic Discourse’, pp. 911–938.

⁴⁸ Indeed, Scott’s *Rob Roy* (1817) deliberately broke these conventions by suggesting it was a text that would follow the tale of the border bandit (thus making the tale relatively predictable), but not introducing the character of Rob Roy himself until relatively late in the novel. See Benedict, p. 71.

have acquired in reading through the whole stock of three circulating libraries', Pattieson turns to her for advice on the story.⁴⁹ Buskbody then demands to know if the hero, Morton, and his love interest, Miss Bellenden, were married, thus seeking a conventional ending to the novel. Pattieson denies her this by suggesting that whilst they were eventually married, Miss Bellenden's mother, Lady Margaret, was not happy with the arrangement, which evidently does not please Buskbody.⁵⁰

Takanashi states that this 'conversation demonstrates Scott's familiarity with genre conventions; the fact that Pattieson's narrative conclusion fails to satisfy Miss Buskbody suggests that Pattieson's narrative is distinct from other novels. Miss Buskbody calls Pattieson's narrative experiment a "gross error" because her reading habits have already confirmed her idea of what a novel should be and how it should end.'⁵¹ However, Cronin takes another view on the novel's conclusion, suggesting that Pattieson and Buskbody's debate is 'urbanely self-mocking' and that 'Scott's suavity conceals, I suspect, a consciousness that in writing novels he is engaged in women's business, more embarrassed than he cares to admit'.⁵² I suggest that both are correct, although I would also bring in McGann's ideas about Scott's games of authorship to explain the manoeuvre. Scott is indeed anxious about the feminine conceptions that surround novels, exemplified by the circulating library expert Buskbody. The voice of the 'female' reader (or the frivolous reader) is personified by Buskbody and is lightly mocked, though she does ultimately guide the ending of the novel: the pair are married, albeit not entirely smoothly. Scott, therefore, is at once signifying to his audience their involvement in the construction of the text (by incorporating his 'familiarity with genre conventions' and novel readers' desires) and, by denying a wholly conventional ending, pushing back against his own anxieties surrounding the genre. However, his audience are in on the joke. In Buskbody's slight mocking and Cleishbotham's claim to worldly knowledge despite his sedentary lifestyle, Scott's audience are made aware of the fiction of the paratexts and the provenance of *Old Mortality*. They are thus made aware that they (and their conceptions) have been considered as a creative factor in the novel's ending and that Scott has chosen teasing or play as an appropriate response (in accordance with his anxieties).

⁴⁹ Takanashi, p. 300; and Sir Walter Scott, *The Tale of Old Mortality*, ed. Douglas Mack, (Edinburgh; Edinburgh University Press, 1993), p. 349.

⁵⁰ See Scott, *The Tale of Old Mortality*, pp. 350–351.

⁵¹ Takanashi, p. 300.

⁵² Cronin, *Paper Pellets*, p. 208.

Old Mortality thus represents a (purportedly) historically accurate tale that denies the simple pleasures of standard novels due to its dogged ‘accuracy’, whilst simultaneously being transmitted to us by an unreliable, pompous narrator who is, himself, fictional. This provenance thus makes that historical accuracy questionable. However, it is also a demonstration of Scott’s awareness of and concerns about the genre he is working within (as Takanashi and Cronin assert), and the extent to which, as a novelist, he is not only working within a ‘feminine’ style but also somewhat dependent upon a large section of his audience who are female, as represented by Buskbody. Whilst he does not wholly appease them (through a smooth marriage between Morton and Miss Bellenden) they, nevertheless, influence the composition and ending of *Old Mortality*. Scott thus blurs the lines between truth and identity to make his audience self-consciously question their own conceptions over authorship, truth, and novel reading. As Margaret Russett suggests in her study *Fictions and Fakes: Forging Romantic Authenticity 1760–1845*, ‘imposture’, the position Scott is taking in the Waverley novels’ paratexts, is a collaborative task by which the audience must, as Coleridge describes it, partake in the ‘willing suspension of disbelief’ in order to enjoy and engage with the text fully.⁵³ In utilising imposture in this way, Scott is once more playing with his Romantic audience’s conceptions of the novel in response to his own anxieties and in an attempt to involve his audience in the creative process, potentially altering their views of novels. Scott’s mobile use of personae, layered and liberal use of truth (through historical accuracy and unreliable, fictional characters), and paratexts that tell the tale of a novel’s composition, are utilised to, at once, entertain various ideological contours within Scott’s audience and maintain his cultural location as a writer of ‘historical romances’. However, they also challenge his audience by demonstrating the distance between his novels’ claims (to be both entertainment and historically accurate) and the necessary strains put on an author to achieve such aims simultaneously. To achieve this, he must have a fluid sense of history and identity. As McGann states:

This kind of writing—so replete in Scott—installs neither a truth of fact nor a truth of fiction but the truth of the game of art. It is more than make-believe, it is conscious make-believe. Scott wants to draw his audience into his fictional world by assuming and playing upon his reader’s distance and disbelief. His

⁵³ Margaret Russett, *Fictions and Fakes: Forging Romantic Authenticity 1760–1845*, (Cambridge; Cambridge University Press, 2006), p. 10.

Romantic reconciliations therefore begin in an imaginative deployment of a non-fictional idea of truth and reality.⁵⁴

His audience are thus made conscious of Scott's untruths (of identity, for instance), in order for them to enjoy his texts as both based in historical reality, albeit delivered to them in a format that plays with identity and historical fact for their entertainment. They are simultaneously invited to read the novel as historically accurate, whilst its tale and the tale of its composition is pure entertainment. Scott is thus playing between the boundaries that mobile identity and historical fiction allow, whilst embracing his audiences' varied interpretations of both his texts and his paratextual personalities. Scott's conceptions of audience demands and entertainment are thus at the heart of the shaping of the novels themselves, as well as the versatile use of truth and identity he employs around those novels.

The World Of 'The Author Of Waverley'

Thus far, I have avoided labelling Scott as 'The Author Of Waverley' for an important reason. It was not until *Ivanhoe* in 1820 that Scott would appear on a title page 'BY "THE AUTHOR OF WAVERLEY" &c.' and not 'THE AUTHOR OF "WAVERLEY"'. Graham Tulloch highlights that this represents a subtle, but crucial, change.⁵⁵ The common formula indicating a link to previous publications (as in 'by the Author of "Pride and Prejudice"') becomes instead a personality in its own right. Originally, Scott had intended to publish the novel under the name of Laurence Templeton, telling Lady Stuart that he wished to pit *Ivanhoe* against the almost simultaneously released *The Monastery* in 'different shapes and publish them with different people and so run the one against the other. I am rather curious to know if I can be detected in both instances'.⁵⁶ Additionally, as part of his paratextual game, Scott had published an article in defence of the authorities at Peterloo in *The Edinburgh Weekly Journal* on the 8th of September 1819, signed by 'L.T.', connecting the novel's supposed author and his political views, as well as his upcoming portrayal of the peaceful relationship between Robin Hood's yeomen with King Richard, to contemporary events. Scott evidently wanted to experiment in the marketplace with various media formats, using the mobile identities

⁵⁴ McGann, 'Walter Scott's Postmodernity', pp. 117–118.

⁵⁵ Graham Tulloch, 'Essay On the Text' in Scott, *Ivanhoe*, p. 415.

⁵⁶ Scott, 'To Lady Louisa Stuart, 23 August 1819' in *The Letters of Sir Walter Scott*, vol. 5, p. 474.

he had created to experiment with their effect on his audience: in these cases, seeing how far his own political options could be pushed under a pseudonym and how different personae might be received by his audiences. However, Constable had already announced the novel as by the same author as *Waverley*, shaping Scott's public perception as one already within a continuous series. Besides, Constable did not want *The Monastery*, which was contracted to Longman and Co., vying for sales with *Ivanhoe*.⁵⁷ Constable evidently persuaded Scott. Graham Tulloch describes how, with such a label on the title page of *Ivanhoe*, Scott was finally given a designation and identity as the best-selling author of the period. The phrase is the result of Constable's motivations. With the change of setting from Scotland to medieval England, Scott clearly desired innovation. Constable, though, having been rebuffed with *Waverley*'s anonymity, wanted continuity and the assurance of continued commercial success with the identification of the author securing this, even if it did not appear under Scott's actual name.⁵⁸ Thus "THE AUTHOR OF WAVERLEY", as a distinct personality, was born.

The incident is a prominent example of the pair's relationship. Occasionally Constable may have some creative influence on the novels, such as *Rob Roy*'s title (1817) which was, according to J. G. Lockhart, 'suggested by Constable' who, over dinner and against Scott's protestations, insisted and won.⁵⁹ Mainly, though, Constable had little creative input beyond suggesting names (*Quentin Durward* (1823)), themes (as with *Kenilworth* (1821) or *The Pirate* (1822)), or by providing materials for Scott's research, largely due to the process of printing which took place before Constable had seen the finished text.⁶⁰ Indeed, his input mainly consisted of marketing decisions, which Scott usually trusted.⁶¹ Constable seemed content with such an arrangement,

⁵⁷ Tulloch, 'Essay On The Text' in Scott, *Ivanhoe*, p. 410.

⁵⁸ Ibid., p. 415.

⁵⁹ Quoted in David Hewitt, 'Essay On The Text' in Sir Walter Scott, *Rob Roy*, ed. David Hewitt, (Edinburgh; Edinburgh University Press, 2008), p. 346.

⁶⁰ One example of this is in the production of *Kenilworth: A Romance* (1821). J.H. Alexander highlights that, prior to *Kenilworth*'s publication, Constable wrote to his son, David, requesting he gather books which he could then supply Scott with for inspiration. See J.H. Alexander, 'Essay On The Text' in Sir Walter Scott, *Kenilworth: A Romance*, ed. J.H. Alexander, (Edinburgh; Edinburgh University Press, 1993), pp. 396–397; and, for Scott thanking Constable for inspirational books, see Scott, 'To Archibald Constable, 20 August 1820' in *The Letters of Sir Walter Scott*, vol. 6, p. 262.

⁶¹ However, in the instance of *Peperil of the Peak*, Scott overruled Constable's advice regarding the tale's marketing (which was even supported by Ballantyne and Lockhart) that the novel be released in three volumes, instead deferring to his own beliefs regarding audience desire, thus eventually writing it in four. On Ballantyne's protestations, Scott wrote: 'The censure of a partial friend does not prepare me very favourable reception from a less favourable public' and that 'Were it not for financial considerations I should almost advise the letting *Peperil* lie by till the

though, remarking to his partner Cadell that ‘my opinion [of *Heart Of Midlothian* (1818)] is of little consequence, as the public seems to be quite crazy for the novels of this author’.⁶² As Thomas Constable described Scott’s relationship with his father: ‘Taking everything into view, I shall not hesitate one moment, if Sir Walter comes in my way, to state that the Author of *Waverley* must have his own way. If he is in the vein, he cannot be stopped with any propriety.’⁶³

In his punctuating of the “THE AUTHOR OF WAVERLEY”, Constable had certainly inspired Scott’s drive to create an overarching personality that would govern all of his relationships with his audience. In ‘The Author Of *Waverley*’, Scott had a persona that he could use to develop his subsequent prefatory materials, eventually sculpting it to become the antithesis to the bumbling Cleishbotham. The prime example of Scott’s attempt to develop a mysterious world in which ‘The Author Of *Waverley*’ sat as an overarching and omniscient character, who was responsive and deferential to his audience, is in the ‘Introductory Epistle’ of *The Fortunes of Nigel* (1822). In it, in order to meet the ‘Author of *Waverley*’, Captain Clutterbuck has to drive ‘on through this succession of darksome chambers, till, like the jeweller of Delhi in the house of the magician Bennaskar, I at length reached a vaulted room, dedicated to secrecy and silence, and beheld, seated by a lamp, and employed in reading a blotted *revise*, the person, or perhaps I should rather say the Eidolon, or Representation of the Author of *Waverley*’.⁶⁴ The description simultaneously mystifies Constable’s premises and ‘The Author of *Waverley*’ by lending him the oriental imagery of Delhi jewellers and magic, whilst concurrently undercutting such magic by also presenting the reality of print culture within a quotidian printing house: studiously reading a blotted revise in Constable’s Edinburgh shop. Clutterbuck, awed by the author’s presence, ‘at once bended the knee, with the classical salutation of, *Salve, magne parens!*’⁶⁵ Once more, Scott undercuts the mystery, created by his own choice to write *Waverley* anonymously as well as its success, by presenting Clutterbuck’s reaction as somewhat comical, whilst revealing to his audience that, through his Latin tag ‘Hello, great parent!’, Clutterbuck’s persona is the product of

next comes out.’ See Scott, ‘To James Ballantyne, 8 November 1822’ in *The Letters of Sir Walter Scott*, vol. 7, p. 278; and Alison Lumsden, ‘Essay On The Text’ in Scott, *Peveril of The Peak*, p. 504.

⁶² ‘Constable to Cadell, August 1818’ in Thomas Constable, *Archibald Constable and His Literary Correspondents: A Memorial by His Son*, 3 Vols., (Edinburgh; Edmonston & Douglas, 1873), vol. 2, p. 97.

⁶³ Quoted in Alison Lumsden, ‘Essay On The Text’ in Scott, *Peveril of The Peak*, p. 504.

⁶⁴ Scott, ‘Introductory Epistle. Captain Clutterbuck To The Rev. Dryasdust’ in *The Fortunes of Nigel*, pp. 4–5.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

the same man as 'The Author Of Waverley'. In his paratext, then, Scott utilises the real world mystery of his anonymity to create a scenario through his mobile use of personae that simultaneously engages with real print culture, his audience's conceptions of 'The Author Of Waverley' as a figure, and the events of the novel: three layers with varying degrees of truth. Initially displeased with the 'Epistle', Constable came to laud his own input into encouraging Scott towards such material by praising it for highlighting the importance of publishers' 'sagacity or good management' to authors' success in the marketplace.⁶⁶

However, the 'Author of Waverley' as a character is also constructed as part of an imaginative performance to offer Scott's readers an unfolding tale by which some of Scott's meta-characters from previous novels also seek the answers to his identity and to how he formulates his tales, allowing his readers to feel as if Scott's characters, too, are accomplices in the (deliberately constructed and encouraged) search for answers. It is, after all, Clutterbuck who seeks Scott in Constable's shop in the Epistle, the supposed editor and contributor of original sources for *The Monastery*, *The Fortunes of Nigel*, and *The Abbot* (1820). Furthermore, *The Monastery* is opened by a communication of letters between Clutterbuck and the 'Eidolon' in which Scott's author-character states that he is 'sorry to observe my old acquaintance Jedediah Cleishbotham has misbehaved himself so far as to desert his original patron, and set up for himself' by abandoning the tales of his landlord for entertaining the public with his new literary allies in Edinburgh.⁶⁷ Scott's various personae, then, are utilised for very different purposes by Scott to present different meanings to his audience. The misbehaving Cleishbotham is used in an attempt to amuse Scott's audience as an unreliable writer and historian. Clutterbuck represents Scott poking fun at the farce of the 'Great Unknown' mystery's effect on some of his audience as well as the role of pernicious editor. The 'Eidolon' or 'Author Of Waverley', alternatively, as the father of them all (and, yet, simultaneously the same as them), stands over all of them in that he possesses the creativity and foresight to conceive of all of these interacting personae and the worlds of each novel.⁶⁸ All of them, thus, exist as responses to various audience's engagement with the Waverley novels,

⁶⁶ Quoted in Frank Jordan, 'Essay On the Text' in Scott, *The Fortunes of Nigel*, p. 411.

⁶⁷ Scott, 'Answer By "The Author Of Waverley" To The Foregoing Letter From Captain Clutterbuck' in *The Monastery*, p. 29.

⁶⁸ Gerard Genette offers a fairly comprehensive list of the instances in which Scott's paratextual characters refer to one another and, occasionally, hint that they are the creative product of one man whose identity remains cloaked by the 'Author of Waverley tag: Scott. See Gerard Genette, *Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretation*, trans. Jane E. Lewin, (Cambridge; Cambridge University Press, 1997), pp. 285–288.

although it is ultimately the ‘Author Of Waverley’, presented as his personae’s father, that Scott’s audience could most engage with and directly write to, as many did.

The preface to *Quentin Durward* (1823) offers an instance of the real world of Romantic culture intruding upon the world of the ‘Author Of Waverley’. In it, the fictional Marquis de Hautlieu converses with ‘The Author Of Waverley’ about the possible identity of the author of *The Bride Of Lammermoor* (1819). He states ‘it is the work of one of your *gens de lettres, qu’on appellent, je crois, le Chevalier Scott*’ to which ‘The Author Of Waverley’ responds:

“I presume you mean Sir Walter?”

“Yes—the same—the same,” answered the Marquis.’

The ‘Author’ goes on:

I had next the common candour to inform my friend, upon grounds which no one could know so well as myself, that my distinguished literary countryman, of whom I shall always speak with the respect his talents deserve, was not responsible for the slight works which the humour of the public had too generously, as well as too rashly, ascribed to him.⁶⁹

In his manoeuvre of fluid identity, Scott simultaneously denies that Walter Scott is the author of *Waverley* whilst, unknown to his audience, stating that, as ‘The Author Of Waverley’, he is. The choice of admission to a French Marquis is curious too, not simply as *Quentin Durward*’s setting is France, but also since pirated French copies of the Waverley novels had been printed under Scott’s actual name since *Waverley* appeared.⁷⁰ Therefore, Scott’s preface to *Quentin Durward* operates in both the real world by being Scott, masked as ‘The Author Of Waverley’ reacting to surfacing rumours of his authorship (bolstered by the French pirated editions), as well as the fictional realm of his paratext in which the imaginary ‘Author of Waverley’ denies to the imagined Marquis that Scott is *Waverley*’s author. The preface and its manipulation of truth and

⁶⁹ Indeed, in the full quotation Scott goes on to admit to his eagerness to reveal the author’s identity, an example of him ‘playing his game’. See Sir Walter Scott, ‘Introduction’ in *Quentin Durward*, ed. J.H Alexander & G.A.M. Wood, (Edinburgh; Edinburgh University Press, 2001), p. 11.

⁷⁰ For an examination of Scott’s reception in Europe, including how he was published under his own name on the Continent (often in pirated editions), see Murray Pittock (ed.), *The Reception of Sir Walter Scott in Europe*, (London; Continuum, 2006).

identity, therefore, is a creative reaction to real events, operating in both a fictional setting, as well as interacting with the real Romantic literary marketplace.⁷¹

While most of Scott's audience could not be certain—or simply did not know—that he was the Author of Waverley until *The Chronicles Of The Canongate* in 1827, it is evident from anonymous fan-mail that his audience enjoyed the mystery and the interplay between his explicitly connected personae. Mayer states that, when examining fans' correspondence with Scott, 'we encounter a sense—sometimes reciprocated by Scott—that some affective link with the artist (hoped for or actually achieved) is the natural result of Scott's immense fame'.⁷² The link goes further than Mayer suggests: readers who wrote to Scott became, I would argue, indicators to the author that his techniques of composition and of negotiating the implications of his own fame in relation to divided audiences (through his use of the fictional authorial world of the 'Author of Waverley') were hugely successful. His reflections and response to a new, precarious period for writers defined largely by powerful, varied audiences worked. In the instance below, that link is built by the connected, playful worlds Scott had constructed. In 1819, an 'Obliged Friend' wrote to 'The Author Of Waverley' to inform him that:

In reading lately the introduction to the beautiful, interesting, [...] tale of '*The Heart Of Midlothian*', it occurred to me that as Jedediah Cleishbotham acknowledges himself a descendant from one of the early members of the society of friends, he may probably be induced to furnish thee with some anecdotes respecting his ancestor, which would assist thee in delineating the character of a real and consistent friend; but as the worthy School-master of Gandercleugh may possibly be better acquainted with Classic Lore than with the history or private life of his forefathers,—there would be no difficulty in collecting materials from other sources, which must be known to an author who appears to possess a firm knowledge of information on all subjects, and a talent for observing human nature in its various shades of distinction.

⁷¹ For another example of Scott's sensitivities to the vagaries of print culture being factored into his composition (specifically upon having early drafts of his novels published in America before Britain), see Joseph Rezek, 'Furious Booksellers: The "American Copy" of the Waverley Novels and the Language of the Book Trade' in *Early American Studies: An Interdisciplinary Journal*, Volume 11, Number 3, (Fall 2013), pp. 557–582.

⁷² Mayer, *Walter Scott*, p. 24.

An ‘Obliged Friend’ continues: ‘I am aware that I ought to apologise for this passing on the time of an author of celebrity, and for addressing myself to a person whom I have never seen, and one who can feel no other interest about me than as being an inhabitant of the same world with himself.’⁷³ An ‘Obliged Friend’, then, challenges ‘The Author Of Waverley’ to develop the lineage of Jedediah, as he doubts whether Jedediah would be capable of the task. The underlining of a ‘real and consistent friend’ could be due to one of two (or potentially both) reasons. Either an ‘Obliged Friend’ is referring to the Quaker ‘Society of Friends’, or the correspondent is emphasising that, if Jedediah will not supply the requested information, then he may not be real at all, or a consistent disguise.⁷⁴ Addressing such a request to ‘The Author Of Waverley’ highlights that he knows Jedediah and ‘The Author’ to be one and the same, but minds not which of the two personalities responds to his letter. The letter’s final line, too, expresses an ambiguity. In referring to ‘The Author Of Waverley’, the letter’s addressee, as ‘one who can feel no other interest about me than as being an inhabitant of the same world with himself’, identifies himself as an inhabitant of the same world as ‘The Author’. Recognising Jedediah as a persona, and evidently the ‘Author Of Waverley’ as another, it becomes questionable as to what ‘world’ they both inhabit. It could be the real world from which an ‘Obliged Friend’ writes his letter. Or it could also be the world of shifting truth and personae that Scott has developed, in which Jedediah and ‘The Author’ are separate people, but which still respond to and engage with the real world. Since Gandercleugh is not a real town to collect materials from, and an ‘Obliged Friend’ references the Author’s ‘celebrity’, we could assume that, like Scott’s prefaces, the letter operates amongst multiple layers of truth and identity. Knowing that ‘The Author Of Waverley’ and Jedediah are the same man, an ‘Obliged Friend’ may be inviting the anonymous Scott to discourse over a world of shifting truth and identity in which they both revel.

Scott’s prefaces are thus partially the product of Constable’s desire to streamline his texts as part of one continuous series of novels through his identification of the ‘The Author Of Waverley’. However, they are also the product of Scott knowing that his au-

⁷³ ‘An Obliged Friend to “The Author Of Waverley,” 1 October 1819’ in NLS, MS.3890, pp. 167–169.

⁷⁴ Mayer also discusses a Quaker who wrote fanmail to Scott (if indeed my correspondent is a Quaker, since the evidence is not conclusive) requesting a more positive description of his sect. In doing so, the correspondent also utilises the intimate term ‘friend’ to describe the author, suggesting a collaborative or, at least, mutually beneficial relationship, since Scott himself was not a Quaker. See Mayer, *Walter Scott*, pp. 187–188.

dience enjoy such prefatory materials and that they were a productive form of negotiating the implications of his astounding popularity. Gerard Genette labels paratexts, such as prefaces, as ‘a threshold, not a boundary, offering a chance to step inside a world or turn back’.⁷⁵ Scott’s prefaces, though, do more. They offer a chance to step into, not just the world of the novel, but also (firstly) into the fictional world of that novel’s creation, whilst simultaneously reflecting on the very real world of print culture the reader has not quite left behind. With his personae interacting throughout multiple texts, Scott creates a mosaic which gradually builds a world of a fictive authorial process that develops with each prefatory instalment. Readers like an ‘Obliged Friend’ evidently enjoyed the interplay of Scott’s personalities and mobile sense of truth across prefaces, even attempting to engage with him in his own game. Thus, the ‘The Author Of Waverley’ and its prefatory world are the product of, not only Scott’s imagination, but Constable’s marketing, and Scott’s awareness of his audience’s willingness to interact with, engage, and enjoy the interplay of versatile personae and truths.

The Interventionist Roles Of Ballantyne And Constable

Previously, I detailed how James Ballantyne acted as an important creative input into *Waverley*. This continued throughout Scott’s career, with the author using Ballantyne frequently as a barometer by which to gauge the public and a novel’s potential reception, commenting in his journal that he, and Cadell, are ‘good specimens of the public taste in general and it is far best to indulge and yield to them unless I was very *very* certain that I was right and they [wrong]’.⁷⁶ Ballantyne acted as a filter through which Scott’s novels passed in order to make them acceptable and legible to his audience. David Hewitt’s General Introduction to the Edinburgh Editions of Scott’s novels describes Ballantyne’s role:

He acted as an editor, not just a proof-reader. He drew Scott’s attention to gaps in the text and pointed out inconsistencies in detail; he asked Scott to standardise names; he substituted nouns for pronouns when they occurred in the first sentence of a paragraph, and inserted the names of speakers in dialogue; he

⁷⁵ Genette, p. 2.

⁷⁶ Where I use ‘wrong’, Scott’s journal states the word ‘rank’. In a note at the foot of the page, Anderson corrects the manuscript to suggest ‘wrong’ or ‘wrang’. See Scott, ‘Wednesday, 12 December 1827’ in *The Journal of Sir Walter Scott*, pp. 394–395.

changed incorrect punctuation, and added punctuation he thought desirable; he corrected grammatical errors; he removed close verbal repetitions; and in a cryptic correspondence in the margins of the proofs he told Scott when he could not follow what was happening, or when he particularly enjoyed something.⁷⁷

Scott usually trusted most of these streamlining alterations for print without scrutiny. The composition of *St. Ronan's Well* (1824) shows Ballantyne performing a crucial and unprecedented (certainly unrepeated) intervention into Scott's text.⁷⁸ This alteration is figured along Scott and Ballantyne's divergent understanding of audience and their morals. Lockhart records that 'When the end [of *St Ronan's Well*] came in view, James Ballantyne suddenly took vast alarm about a particular feature in the history of the heroine' in which Clara Mowbray had premarital affairs with Valentine Bulmer, calling Constable in for support, which resulted in 'the author very reluctantly consent[ing] to cancel and rewrite about twenty-four pages, which was enough to obliterate, to a certain extent, the dreaded scandal'.⁷⁹ Due to Mark Weinstein's work in the Edinburgh 'Essay On The Text', we know that Lockhart is slightly inaccurate.⁸⁰ Clara did not have premarital sex with Valentine, the Earl of Etherington, although she had done with Francis Tyrrel, seven years before the novel's opening. This is revealed by Hannah Irwin's confession to Josiah Cargill. In altering his novel to Ballantyne's, and evidently Constable's, wishes, Scott actually only rewrites twenty-four lines, not twenty-four pages as Lockhart claims.⁸¹ The instance is indicative of two dynamics of Scott's relationship with his printer and publisher: that Ballantyne acted as a medium through which Constable would attempt to influence Scott's novels, and Ballantyne was a filter through which Scott judged public opinion. Due to Constable not seeing a manuscript before it

⁷⁷ David Hewitt, 'General Introduction To The Series' in Scott, *Waverley*, p. xiii.

⁷⁸ It is important to note Blackwood and Murray attempted a similar intervention in *The Black Dwarf*, which ultimately led to the collapse of Scott's working relationship with them. Evidently, Constable held more influence and a greater degree of leeway in Scott's productive processes.

⁷⁹ Lockhart's explains that, in his attempts to persuade Scott to later the novel, 'James reclaimed with double energy, and called Constable to the rescue;—and after some pause, the author very reluctantly consented to cancel and rewrite about twenty-four pages, which was enough to obliterate, to a certain extent, the dreaded scandal—and in a similar degree, as he always persisted, to perplex and weaken the course of his narrative, and the dark effect of its catastrophe.' Quoted in Mark Weinstein, 'Essay On The Text' in Sir Walter Scott, *Saint Ronan's Well*, ed. Mark Weinstein, (Edinburgh; Edinburgh University Press, 1995), p. 390.

⁸⁰ It is not infrequent for Lockhart to embellish his *Life Of Scott* due to his relationship with the author, and he is often found to be slightly inaccurate.

⁸¹ Mark Weinstein, 'Essay On The Text' in Scott, *Saint Ronan's Well*, p. 390.

was printed, a unique situation in the period, he had little option but to defer to either Scott or Ballantyne for validation.⁸² Ballantyne thus acted as a filter through which Constable must speculate that his investment will pay off. Evidently, when Ballantyne turned to Constable, he used him as leverage with which to pressure Scott into changes that he disagreed with. Constable thus had a degree of intervention in Scott's works, although it was often blind and at the guidance of Ballantyne.

However, Ballantyne also acted as a filter through which Scott viewed his audience. Whilst he received direct fan-mail, Ballantyne was evidently Scott's preferred method of scrutinising his audience's demands. Such an occurrence took place in *The Pirate* (1822) where Ballantyne advised, over Scott protestations, censoring the words 'jade' and 'bitch' to 'wench' in the original manuscript lines of:

What a dashing attitude the jade had with her, as she seized the pistol—d—n me, that touch would have brought the house down. What a Roxalana the bitch would have made, (for in his oratory, Bunce, like Sancho's gossip, Thomas Cecil, was apt to use the most energetic word which came to hand, without accurately considering its propriety).⁸³

In his journal, particularly during the production of *The Life Of Napoleon Buonaparte* (1827), Scott makes frequent allusions to his disgruntlement with Ballantyne's advice, but defers to him as he is the best gauge of the public he has. For instance, Scott records that: 'I had a letter from Jem Ballantyne, plague on him, full of remonstrance deep and solemn upon the carelessness of Bonaparte. The rogue is right too. But as to correcting my stile to the Jemmy jemmy linkup feedle tune of what is called fine writing—I'll be d—if I do'.⁸⁴ As usual, though, Scott acceded.

⁸² Demonstrating the unique position Constable held in relation to Scott's production process, in a response to Henry Carey, Scott's American printer, when he asked for an earlier supply of proof-sheets, Cadell summarised it thus: '[W]hen we mention to you that the M.S. goes in all cases to the Printer as it is written without waiting either for the completion of a chapter or Volume and is set up as soon as received so that at the completion of the third or last Volume the work is in types as soon as we could get the M.S. copied you will at once see that we can afford you no facilities in this respect and it often happens that the last part of one of these works is all at press within a few days of the completion of the M.S. by the Author were the whole three or 4 Vols put into our hands as in ordinary cases complete we could treat with you on a different footing but our great Author takes his own way and we must conform.' Quoted in G.A.M. Wood & David Hewitt, 'Essay On The Text' in Scott, *Redgauntlet*, p. 393.

⁸³ See Mark Weinstein and Alison Lumsden, 'Essay On The Text' in Sir Walter Scott, *The Pirate*, ed. Mark Weinstein and Alison Lumsden, (Edinburgh; Edinburgh University Press, 2001), p. 408.

⁸⁴ Scott, 'Wednesday, 6 September 1826' in *The Journal of Sir Walter Scott*, p. 194.

Thus, whilst Scott's texts received little editorial intervention (except to correct minor faults and streamline the text), Ballantyne did occasionally act as a creative influence upon Scott's plots, censoring them with a moralistic audience in mind, especially in *St. Ronan's Well* and *The Pirate*. Whilst the pair evidently disagreed over their conceptions of audience demands, trusting Ballantyne as his best guide to a mass audiences' desire, Scott often deferred to his advice. This stands in contrast to Constable who, due to the dynamic Scott's initial anonymity had contracted him into, had little to no influence on the direction of Scott's tales. Ballantyne thus sculpted Scott's texts with a large and often moralistic audience in mind primarily, but with secondary considerations for Constable and Scott's financial interests, occasionally wielding Constable as a tool to sway Scott's stubbornness.

Conclusion

With *The Tales Of My Landlord*, Scott built upon the opportunities *Waverley's* anonymity had allowed him to carve out space for himself to more freely engage with the components of Romantic literary culture in a playful and advantageous way. He utilised the mystery surrounding the 'Great Unknown' to navigate between publishers for different series, seizing for himself better terms with agents like Murray and Constable, whilst securing their desire to compete for him as their writer due to his success. As is evident in *Saint Ronan's Well*, Ballantyne acted as an important medium through which both Constable and Scott's audience shaped Scott's texts, transmitting and tempering Scott's publisher's opinions to an occasionally prickly author, and acting as a filter through which Scott could gauge and respond to public opinion. Ballantyne thus acted as the most important editorial presence in Scott's production process.

However, such moves which seized creative space for Scott were ultimately the product of his own concerns, concerns surrounding his new position as a novel writer (or, as Cronin terms it, his attempts to 'cross-dress' a female dominated genre) and as a writer who was fully dependent upon the newly emergent, industrial print market that would sit incompatible with his own self-perception as a landed gentleman.⁸⁵ In carving out such a space through anxious anonymity, Scott was consequently also free to more actively play with his audience, challenging their cultural assumptions surrounding the

⁸⁵ Even if this status was purchased off the back of his commercial success.

historical novel as well as the literary industry. In other words, Scott's playful relationship with audience was the product of his own deeper worries about how they perceived him.

At the prompting of Constable's desire for continuity in the *Waverley* series, Scott developed 'The Author Of *Waverley*' and its world in which he could engage his audience in a way that actively invited them to view his various personae and fluid sense of truth consciously as part of an effort to both entertain them and measure his success in negotiating their relationship in such a precarious period for authors. He did so highly self-consciously, so that reading a Scott novel depended on reflecting on the ways in which readers had shaped, and could further shape, the nature of that text. By making the boundaries of his paratexts 'porous', as McGann terms it, between his novels' fictions, his own playful personae, and the real world of literary culture and reception, Scott created multiple layers of truth and multiple worlds between which his audience enjoyed navigating. His paratexts thus constitute intersections where the real world of Romantic literary culture blur with Scott's mobile and layered use of identity and truth. The result is a creative product—a novel—that acts in a very different way to the process imagined by traditional Romantic ideas of authorship, whereby readers receive the fully-formed work of a genius who creates in isolation. By looking at Scott's fan mail, we see clearly that these worlds are something his audience engaged with, enjoyed, and took pleasure in being conscious of Scott's considerate composition process and authorial games. As we shall see, with the looming crash of 1825, Scott's versatile use of identity was constrained by the buffeting effects of an economically volatile Romantic literary culture.

Chapter Six: Scott And The Financial Crash Of 1825 - *The Tales Of The Crusaders* (1825) and *Woodstock* (1826)

Thomas Carlyle, remembering Scott's 1825, bluntly summarised:

One day the Constable mountain, which seemed to stand strong like the other rock mountains, gave suddenly, as the icebergs do, a loud-sounding crack; suddenly, with huge clangor, shivered itself into ice-dust; and sank, carrying much along with it. In one day Scott's high-heaped money-wages became fairy-money and nonentity; in one day the rich man and lord of land saw himself penniless, landless, a bankrupt among creditors.¹

Indeed, 1825 did see the collapse of Constable and Co., amongst other publishers and printers, and, with it, Scott's fortune and anonymity. Forced by circumstance in *The Chronicles Of The Canongate* of 1827, Scott finally acknowledged himself as author of the Waverley novels. However, as I shall demonstrate in my discussion of novels like *The Betrothed* (1825) and *Woodstock* (1826), this was not the first instance of the capitalist market and non-authorial agents forcing Scott into a position that he was not entirely comfortable with. It was, though, the moment Scott's relationship with audience would be irrevocably changed.

Here I shall outline how, with the crash of 1825, Scott lost the creative space allowed by anonymity and his use of fluid personae, resulting in his eventual unmasking and an oppressive change in his creative process. Even in early 1825 (with the crash imminent), non-authorial agents were keen to press on Scott their creative input into *The Tales Of the Crusaders* (a four-volume set containing *The Betrothed* and *The Talisman*) due to their concerns regarding the continued financial viability of the Waverley novels. Scott's own concerns, including those I have outlined in previous chapters as well as financial, were increasingly influencing his prefaces and novels. This constrained Scott's ability to toy with his audience before, with his unmasking, removing the space in which he could engage his audience playfully from behind his veil. I shall also explore the effects present upon Scott's composition when, with the collapse of Constable and Co. and Constable's ailing health, Scott experienced an altered editorial dynamic when

¹ Thomas Carlyle, 'The Amoral Scott' in *London And Westminster Review*, (January 1838), xxviii, pp. 293–345, in *Scott: The Critical Heritage*, p. 372.

Cadell took over as publisher, as well as when both Scott and James Ballantyne were required to write to reimburse their debts. This section shall explain how these factors led to a deeper consideration of Scott's own position (especially pseudonymity) in the *Waverley* novels and an alternative relationship with his audience.

In this case study, I have analysed how Scott invited and depended upon consideration of audiences in his creative process. I will conclude my discussion of Scott by exploring how he, like Landon and Byron, engaged with the author most famous for resisting the power of the Romantic audience, Wordsworth. Wordsworth's preface to the *Lyrical Ballads* and his 'Essay Supplementary To The Preface' present the archetypal Romantic relationship with audience as one of isolated composition, rejection by a contemporary audience, followed by posthumous success. Drawing on the work of Mayer, Scott Simpkins, and Andrew Bennett, I shall demonstrate how Scott's *Journal*, offers a theorisation of this relationship that at once depended on and pushed against his friend's view.²

A Joint Stock Author Of Waverley

In February 1814, Constable wrote to Longman explaining how the 'necessity of keeping up Mr Scott's name by the greatest attention to the sales of his works increases every day'.³ Such eagerness for constant output to maintain the public's favour evidently influenced Scott's thinking as between 1814 and 1825 'The Author Of Waverley' produced nineteen novels or novellas. By *The Fortunes of Nigel* in 1822, Constable was urging Cadell to consider the exact opposite: 'I need not say to you how long and how anxiously it has been my wish—that the Great Unknown should not come before the public quite so rapidly'.⁴ However, Scott's publishing pair acquiesced to Scott's demand for rapid production for fear of another defection to Murray and Blackwood. They did eventually persuade Scott that they 'may gorge the public', having him agree to delay the writing of *St Ronan's Well* (1824) from August of 1823 to October.⁵ Scott's drive for continuous output, contrasted with Constable's desire to pace his works (allowing demand and their prices to mature), is explained in the journal Scott kept late in his life. In an entry for January 1826, Scott records that:

² See Mayer, *Walter Scott*; Bennett, *Culture of Posterity*; and Scott Simpkins, 'The Reader and the Romantic Preface' in *Rocky Mountain Review*, Volume 44, Number 1-2, (1990), pp. 17–34.

³ Quoted in Hewitt, 'Essay On The Text' in Scott, *The Antiquary*, p. 362.

⁴ Quoted in Jordan, 'Essay On The Text' in Scott, *The Fortunes of Nigel*, p. 412.

⁵ Quoted in Weinstein, 'Essay On The Text' in Scott, *Saint Ronan's Well*, p. 377.

The publick favour is my only lottery. I have long enjoyed the foremost prize and something in my breast tells me my Evil Genius will not overwhelm me if I stand by myself. Why should I not? I have no enemies—many attached friends—the popular ascendancy which I have maintained is of the kind which is rather improved by frequent appearances before the public. In fact Critics may say that they will but ‘*hain* your reputation and *tyme* your reputation’ is a true proverb.⁶

Conscious of his success depending on an audience as fickle as a ‘lottery’, Scott believed he must ‘dress my sails to every wind. And so blow on, God’s wind, and spin round, whirligig’.⁷

Such a belief of his reliance upon his audience’s desire for his works, and Scott providing new works rapidly for this desire, is explored in his preface to *The Betrothed* (1825). Utilising his inside knowledge of the print industry which Scott had been working within, Scott displays an awareness of his place in relation to his audience and Romantic literary culture as developing and industrialised, by creating a scene where his characters, once again, encounter the Eidolon, this time chairing a meeting of the ‘Share-holders’ of the Waverley Novels to discuss forming a ‘Joint-Stock Company’ for their production. Whilst the scene embraces the increasing role of commerce in literary production in its formulation, playing upon this for audience enjoyment, it encapsulates Scott’s unease towards mercantilism in literature. Indeed, like Byron, whilst Scott reaped the benefits of a newly industrialised print market, he was also wary of it. As discussed, Byron was reluctant to immerse himself in the industrial and trade nature of printing, refusing to ‘lower’ himself to the level of tradesman for fear of negative public perception. Scott’s relationship is similar, especially in that, whilst he did involve himself in commerce, it was about appearing above trade to the public that mattered.⁸ His journal and letters demonstrate his appreciation of hard work and commerce, and he associates such values with societal advancement, incorporating such views into his composition process. Sam McKinstry demonstrates how positive scenes of commerce and trade exist throughout *St Ronan’s Well*, *Ivanhoe*, *The Antiquary*, and especially *Rob*

⁶ Scott, ‘Friday, 20 January 1826’ in *The Journal of Sir Walter Scott*, p. 62.

⁷ Scott, ‘Monday, 16 June 1828’ in *Ibid.*, p. 491.

⁸ Scott was heavily involved in commerce and entrepreneurship throughout his life, as shown by him being Ballantyne’s partner, but also by investing heavily in another Joint-Stock Company at this time, the Oil Gas Light Company. See Sutherland, p. 274.

Roy, where ‘mercantile speculation’ is presented as ‘something captivating to the adventurer, even independent of the hope of gain’.⁹ Likewise, linking hard commerce to success, Scott, in *The Fortunes of Nigel*, states the ‘successful author is a productive labourer, and that his works constitute as effectual a part of the public welfare, as that which is created by any other manufacture’.¹⁰

Combining such attitudes in *The Betrothed*’s preface, characters from Scott’s novels and paratexts (like Clutterbuck) are invited into the creative and marketing process, intermingling with admissions of how the real world of Romantic literary culture are also part of that process. This is exemplified by the Eidolon’s opening of the ‘Minutes Of A General Meeting Of The Share-Holders Designing To Form A Joint-Stock Company, United For The Purpose Of Writing And Publishing The Class Of Works Called The Waverley Novels, Held In The Waterloo Tavern, Regent’s Bridge, Edinburgh, 1st June, 1825’ where he declares that:

we have a joint interest in the valuable Property which has accumulated under our common labours. While the public have been idly engaged in ascribing to one individual or another the immense mass of the various matter which the labours of many had accumulated, you, gentlemen, well know, that every person in this numerous assembly has had his share, before now, in the honours and profits of our common success. It is indeed to me a mystery how the sharp-sighted could suppose so huge a mass of sense and nonsense, jest and earnest, humorous and pathetic, good, bad, and indifferent, amounting to scores of volumes, could be the work of one hand, when we know the doctrine so well laid down by the immortal Adam Smith, concerning the division of labour.

The passage confuses the boundaries of Scott’s novels: his paratextual fictions of identity, and the very real world of publishing and reception. Having been published openly, Scott’s audience are invited in as spectators who ‘have a joint interest in the valuable

⁹ McKinsty describes Scott’s presentation of entrepreneurship as ‘something captivating to the adventurer, even independent of the hope of gain’. He who embarks on that fickle sea ... may be wrecked and lost, unless the gales of fortune breathe in his favour. This mixture of necessary attention and inevitable hazard, the frequent and awful uncertainty whether providence shall overcome fortune, or fortune baffle the schemes of prudence ... has all the fascination of gambling, without its moral guilt.’ See Sam McKinsty, ‘The Positive Depiction of Entrepreneurs and Entrepreneurship in the Novels of Sir Walter Scott’ in *Journal of Scottish Historical Studies*, Vol. 26, Issue 1-2, (Jan 2008), pp. 83–99 (pp. 86–87).

¹⁰ Scott, ‘Introductory Epistle. Captain Clutterbuck To The Rev. Dryasdust’ in *The Fortunes of Nigel*, p. 14.

Property' of the Waverley novels due to their contributing of 'labours' through their reception, responses, and reviews, which in turn shape Scott's texts. Likewise do the fictional characters from the novels, such as Oldbuck, 'acting secretary' of the meeting, who would not exist were it not for those who laboured to invent them. So too the paratextual characters, including the persona of the Eidolon who, were it not for Scott's anonymity resting upon the public intrigue behind it, would also not have been developed. Every party (the audience, Scott himself, or those like Constable) does indeed have a 'share' in 'the honours and profits of [the novels'] common success', but it is disarming for an author so pointedly to make this clear. Scott's fluid sense of truth abounds here, in claiming that parties like his audience have contributed to the novels' success and creation (true) but also that his characters like Oldbuck have had a part in the 'division of labour' in creating each text (untrue).

By discussing a 'Joint-Stock Company' for the Waverley novels, Scott is engaging with his lifelong involvement with commerce and also the 'fashion of the age' of speculative, share based companies, thus allowing the real world to creep into his paratexts (as he had when inviting in audience as a spectator).¹¹ Scott then paints a scene that plays on the advice that his editors have provided to him to slow down production of his novels. Dousterswivel (from *The Antiquary*) suggests that the novels be written by steam machine, particularly the presentation of 'common-places', 'the love-speeches of the hero, the description of the heroine's person, the moral observations', and each 'conclusion' since the author is surely 'tired of pumping his own brains'.¹² For an author jaded by constant production, as Scott was when he slowed the production of *St Ronan's Well*, a steam novel machine made hungry by audience demand must seem an attractive prospect. But it also reflects his joking acknowledgment that, due to his output, Scott himself was, as Gary Kelly describes him, a 'novel-making machine, unwittingly designed by half a lifetime's reading, professional activity, social experience and observation'.¹³ Such output generated by a machine, would look similar, in the real

¹¹ See Sir Walter Scott, 'Minutes Of A General Meeting Of The Share-Holders Designing To Form A Joint-Stock Company, United For The Purpose Of Writing And Publishing The Class Of Works Called The Waverley Novels, Held In The Waterloo Tavern, Regent's Bridge, Edinburgh, 1st June, 1825' in *The Betrothed*, ed. J.B. Ellis, (Edinburgh; Edinburgh University Press, 2009), p. 8; and for *Walladmor* playing in similar metafictional ways with authorial identity, see Angela Esterhammer, "Improvisation, Speculation, Risky Business: Fiction and Performance, 1824-1826" in *BRANCH: Britain, Representation and Nineteenth-Century History*, ed. Dino Franco Felluga, *Extension of Romanticism and Victorianism on the Net*. <<http://www.branch-collective.org>> [accessed 17/04/19].

¹² See Scott, 'Minutes' in *The Betrothed*, p. 5.

¹³ Gary Kelly, *English Fiction of the Romantic Period 1789-1830*, (Edinburgh; Longman, 1989), p. 140.

world of reception, to what Scott had already achieved. His joke, then, proposed by *The Antiquary*'s Dousterswivel, is an example of where Scott's prefaces are made as open and malleable as possible, allowing both Scott's previous novels, as well as audience expectations and impressions of 'The Author Of Waverley' to shape the construction of the text. The reader is reminded that they had shaped and will shape the structure of the novels; that they have a seat at the table, imaginary as it might be, at the Waterloo Tavern.

Another compulsion print culture had placed upon Scott, implicit in *The Betrothed*'s preface, is the pressure exerted by other authors in the market who might take a share of 'The Author Of Waverley's' success. For many of the shareholders, Dousterswivel's machine seems enticing. In his discussion with Captain Clutterbuck in *Peperil of the Peak* (1822), 'The Author of Waverley' states that:

I doubt the beneficial effect of too much delay, both on account of the author and the public. A man should strike while the iron is hot, and hoist sail while the wind is fair. If a successful author keeps not the stage, another instantly takes his ground.¹⁴

Evidently aware of other authors' attempts to 'replace' Scott and, again, inviting real literary culture into the creation of his text, Scott references the German Willibald Alexis's *Walladmor* (1824), an anonymous imitation of Scott, as part of his discrediting of *The Antiquary*'s German villain Dousterwivel's suggestions of replacing 'The Author Of Waverley'. Exemplifying playfully his fear of usurpation if not for rapid production, Scott links the real world publication (*Walladmor*, a real rival text) and his own fictions (Dousterswivel). The effect is to blur the lines between reality and fiction, and to at once announce his brazen commercialism to his audience and to partially dodge the stigma attached to it. Scott incorporates an assumed audience awareness of *Walladmor*, indicates to them its charlatan nature (thus maintaining his public image and his cata-

¹⁴ Scott's full quotation reveals the multiple pressures an audience places upon, especially, him in that their fickleness may lead him to be replaced quickly and that each work must be better than the last in order to maintain his reputation: 'If a writer lies by for ten years ere he produces a second work, he is superseded by others; or, if the age is so poor of genius and that this does not happen, his own reputation becomes his greatest obstacle. The public will expect the new work to be ten times better than its predecessor; the author will expect it should be ten times more popular, and 'tis a hundred to ten that both are disappointed.' See Scott, 'Introductory Epistle' in *Peperil of the Peak*, p. 10.

logue's value), and engages (what he assumes to be) a loyal audience who would recognise the playful interchanges between the real state of the Romantic literary marketplace, his paratexts, and the personalities and histories of his characters. Scott thus employs his own previous texts and his audience, whom he assumes to have shared knowledge (with him) of new literature and his old novel (due to their loyalty), into the construction of his preface.

Reflecting on his output and his occasional dissatisfaction with it due to audience demands, Scott wrote in his journal the public 'weigh good and evil qualities by the pound. Get a good name and you may write trash. Get a bad one and you may write like Homer without pleasing a single reader. I am perhaps l'enfant gâté de succès but I am brought to the stake perforce and must stand the course.'¹⁵ Scott must produce regularly so as not to allow a Dousterswivel with a *Walladmor* to take his place, performing the role of a novel writing machine. Despite being the 'spoilt child of success', Scott is brought to the stake by the demands of Romantic literary culture and reception. The joke perhaps is, then, that one part of Scott, in *The Betrothed*, views a potential novel-writing machine as an attractive prospect (a prospect suggested by a fragment of Scott's own imagination: Dousterswivel).

Ultimately, the motion is declined, with Dousterswivel labelled a 'common swindler' by Oldbuck, as in *The Antiquary*. Scott's victory over the demands of literary culture is declared when the Eidolon proclaims:

The world, and you, gentlemen, may think what you please [...] but I intend to write the most wonderful book which the world ever read—a book in which every incident shall be incredible, yet strictly true—a work recalling recollections with which the ears of this generation once tingled, and which shall be read by our children with admiration approaching to incredulity. Such shall be the LIFE OF NAPOLEON BONAPARTE, by the AUTHOR OF WAVERLEY!¹⁶

Outrageously blurring the lines between the fictions of his novels, the mobile truths and identities of his paratexts, with the real world of literary culture and reception, Scott throws in real marketing to announce the publication of his next piece. Scott's preface to *The Betrothed* not only, as McGann suggests, produces a text where 'the boundaries

¹⁵ Scott, 'Wednesday, 29 April 1829' in *The Journal of Sir Walter Scott*, p. 554.

¹⁶ Scott, 'Minutes' in *The Betrothed*, p. 10.

between fiction and fact have been made as porous as possible' for audience enjoyment and engagement, but also blurs the line between the creative impulse of art with real world marketing and commerce aimed squarely at those readers.¹⁷

However, crucially, it is not 'SIR WALTER SCOTT' advertising Napoleon's biography. Distance between Scott's public image and grubby book production is maintained by his use of personae. Thus, like Byron, Scott's concern over his appearance as a gentleman rather than tradesman is formulated into the construction of his texts, and thus the playful relationship with audience that permeates them. Had it been Scott's own name advertised, rather than the 'AUTHOR OF WAVERLEY', the advert may have been less bold. Pseudonymity then, constructed out of his anxieties surrounding the role of commerce in literature, actively allowed Scott a greater degree of creative licence and boldness in regards to his audience than his own name.

Evidently, from Scott's fan-mail this blatant advertisement produced its intended effect, generating excitement for Napoleon's biography and, again, reinforcing that Scott's canny use of authorial personae was a successful tactic in navigating the precarious Romantic literary market and the implications of his own popularity. Writing to 'The Author of Waverley' in 1825, 'M' declares that:

The intention you have announced of publishing a Life of Napoleon cannot but be highly interesting to all those who wish that brilliancy of exploits should be adorned by beauty of style, & to find the greatest prose-writer of the age employed in detailing the achievements & marking the defects of its greatest hero.¹⁸

'M' clearly ignores the other supposed contributors of the Waverley novels outlined in *The Betrothed's* preface (like Oldbuck) and directly addresses his praise to one man: the

¹⁷ McGann, 'Walter Scott's Postmodernity', p. 120.

¹⁸ See "'M" to "The Author Of Waverley"', 14 November 1825' in NLS, MS.886, p. 9; Much like 'M', Scott received many letters from readers eager to see *The Life Of Napoleon Buonaparte*, often offering advice, such as this one, comparing Napoleon and 'The Author Of Waverley': 'Of your success, not many seem to doubt; & [Napoleon's] deeds and your imagination can hardly outstrip one another—but still, still, if you do succeed, you are as wonderful a creature, as the wonderful being, the subject of your intended story. It is always on the tip of my tongue & my pen, to say the greatest that ever appeared among men. But to have been that, he must have been, what he was *not*—a good man.' See 'Unidentified Correspondent to "The Author Of Waverley"', November 1826' in NLS, MS.3903, p. 196.

‘Author Of Waverley’.¹⁹ In doing so, he exemplifies McGann’s claim that Scott’s audience are made aware, that in reading a Scott preface, they are entering a ‘house of fictions’: they acknowledge that all of the supposed shareholders are fictional and actually the imaginative products of one man. Evidently, they enjoy such an interplay of mobile truth and identity as well as eagerly anticipate *The Life Of Napoleon Buonaparte* (1827) due to ‘The Author’s’ outrageous marketing.

The preface to *The Betrothed* thus acts as an example of how Scott’s own attitudes towards commerce, both positive and wary, sculpted by his reception and engagements with audience and the contemporary literary marketplace, acted as a creative stimulus to his works. *The Betrothed*’s preface presents the Waverley novels as polyvalent and operating on different planes of truth, whilst also demonstrating that through audience reception, engagement, and responses to the novels and their prefaces, they, alongside the machinery of literary production such as publishers or printers like James Ballantyne, act as a crucial pillar in Scott’s compositional considerations of each text and paratext. Through his shifting play with identity and truth, the preface of *The Betrothed*, stands as an explicit example of Scott making the boundaries between fiction, paratext, and Romantic literary culture, permeable in order to acknowledge the debt he holds to his audience in the production and commercial success of his texts. Evidently such play, even going so far as outrageous advertisement, thus mixing real world marketing with his multiple fictions, was a move his audience enjoyed, engaged with, and responded positively to, whilst acknowledging (and even playing within) the game Scott was constructing.

The 1825 Crash

To understand the pressures that shaped Scott’s career after 1825, we must first understand the shifts that took place in it due to the financial crash in the literary market of that year. In 1813, Scott’s identity as a tradesman, being the secret partner in Ballantyne’s printing firm, was nearly revealed by a banking crisis. With only hours to spare,

¹⁹ Both letters discussed above were sent to the ‘Author Of Waverley’ via Scott’s publisher, Constable And Co.

money from Scott's friends saved the business and Scott from the embarrassment of being declared bankrupt.²⁰ Remembering this, Scott recorded in his journal that 'I had a lesson in 1814 which should have done good upon me. But success and abundance erased it from my mind'.²¹ This was true. By the end of 1825, Constable's publishing house had folded. With a fresh banking crisis, fuelled by the very joint-stock companies Scott had discussed in *The Betrothed*, Constable's London agents Hurst Robinson & Co. ceased payments to Constable due to their speculations in hops leading them into a debt of £100,000.²² Ross Alloway cites economic historian Stefan Altorfer in suggesting 'that the underlying cause of the crash was Britain's "difficult transition to a peace-time economy after the Napoleonic Wars." A governmental policy of economic expansion encouraged low interest rates and an abundance of banknotes. The easy money encouraged reckless speculation in joint stock companies'.²³ The Bank Of England's reaction caused panic, with loans drying up and the stock market crashing. According to Alloway, 'Constable and Co., Hurst, Robinson and Co., and Ballantyne and Co. formed a fragile triumvirate of debt; if any party failed to pay a single bill that came due, all would be ruined. As Cadell wrote to Robinson, "he, and you and us are one."'²⁴ Constable's ledgers showed that most of the assets were on paper only, with Archibald Constable & Co. owing James Ballantyne & Co. £29,088, 2s. 6d, and Ballantyne owing Constable £29,624, 2s., 9d, with neither possessing the funds to repay the debt guaranteed by the other. Scott, as partner, was liable for the bills.²⁵ Since nineteenth-century companies operated with unlimited liability, Scott's debt, including Ballantyne & Co.'s liability, totalled over £120,000.²⁶

The results were decisive. For months Constable's health had been failing and he eventually died in July of 1827. Scott blamed Constable, perhaps with some cause, for his financial troubles, writing in his journal: 'Constable's death might have been a

²⁰ Constable loaned Scott £2000, and the Duke of Buccleuch £4000, as well as various other sums from Scott's friends, in order to save Ballantyne and Co. For more on this, see Sutherland, p. 152.

²¹ Scott, 'Tuesday, 22 November 1825' in *The Journal of Sir Walter Scott*, p. 7.

²² See Ross Alloway, 'Cadell and the Crash' in *Book History*, Volume 11, (2008), pp. 125–147 (p. 132); and for more description of Scott's actions during the financial crash of 1825, see Sutherland, pp. 284–296.

²³ See Stefan Altorfer, *History of Financial Disasters 1763–1995*, 3 Vols., (London: Pickering and Chatto, 2006), vol. 1, p. 161, quoted in Alloway, p. 128.

²⁴ Alloway, p. 131.

²⁵ W.E.K. Anderson, 'Introduction' in Scott, *The Journal of Sir Walter Scott*, p. xxiii.

²⁶ Indeed, £20,000 of that £120,000 worth of debt was personal debt taken out to fund Scott's expansions to his house at Abbotsford and his expensive lifestyle as 'Laird of Abbotsford'. See Sutherland, p. 296.

most important thing to me if it had happened some years ago and I should then have lamented it much. He has lived to do me some injury yet excepting the last £5000 I think most unintentionally.’²⁷ Scott agreed with creditors that, in order to save Ballantyne and Co., he would hand over the profits of all forthcoming novels to them, with a little to spare for his living expenses.²⁸ Evidently unhappy with the situation, but aware of his obligations, Scott determined to ‘involve no friend either rich or poor—My own right hand shall do it—Else will I be *done* in the slang language and *undone* in common parlance.’²⁹

With Constable’s death, Constable and Co. was taken over by Robert Cadell, his business partner.³⁰ Whilst most critics have apportioned blame to Cadell for the folding of Constable’s business, particularly Sutherland, Alloway offers an important intervention, arguing that Cadell actually saved Scott from the worst of the crash, particularly by citing Scott’s own opinion: ‘I shall always think the better of Cadell for this—not merely because his feet are beautiful on the mountains who brings good tidings but because he shewd feeling—deep feeling, poor fellow—he who I thought had no more than his numeration table’ and that ‘I will not forget this if I get through.’³¹

These two consequences were to have a profound effect on Scott’s creative process. Newly indebted, Scott’s work demonstrates an increasing concern about financial matters as well as the maintenance (or lack thereof) of his anonymity, even as early as *Woodstock* which was composed throughout the crisis. Scott’s debts eventually forced him to reveal himself to his audience under terms he was not happy with in 1827. As I shall demonstrate, such circumstances limited and then ended Scott’s ability and will to tease his audience, indelibly altering his relationship with them away from theatre, play, and experimentation.

With the death of Constable, Scott’s publishing dynamic changed. Whilst Ballantyne was still in place, Cadell was promoted to a more prominent role, helping shape

²⁷ Scott, ‘Monday, 23 July 1827’ in *The Journal of Sir Walter Scott*, p. 331.

²⁸ Commenting on this agreement with his creditors, Scott wrote: “‘Misfortune’s growling bark” comes louder and louder. By assigning my whole property to trustees for behoof of Creditors, and therewith two works in progress and nigh publication, with all my future literary labours, I conceived I was bringing into the field a large fund of payment which could not exist without my exertions and that therefore I was entitled to a corresponding degree of indulgence.’ See Scott, ‘Thursday, 16 February 1826’ in *Ibid.*, p. 91.

²⁹ Scott, ‘Sunday, 22 January 1826’ in *Ibid.*, p. 65.

³⁰ Alloway describes Cadell’s role, highlighting that he ‘operated as Constable and Co.’s chief financial officer, making the day-to-day decisions about paying the bills, borrowing money, and negotiating with the trade as well as the firm’s authors.’ See Alloway, p. 125.

³¹ See Scott, ‘Sunday, 18 December 1825’ in *The Journal of Sir Walter Scott*, p. 42; and Alloway, pp. 143–144.

Scott's novels. As I shall demonstrate, both Ballantyne and Cadell became increasingly concerned about Scott's profitability, prompting Scott into a period of self-doubt and his eventual attempt to force them back into a paradigm where he wielded the final say on what they printed. Due to both Ballantyne and Cadell's reliance on the profits of Scott to pay off their own debts, they acquiesced. What will become clear, though, is that in tying his career so closely to the fluctuations of market forces, everything had changed for Scott's novel composition process after 1825.

Subjectivity in *Woodstock*

The composition of *Woodstock* was fraught for Scott. Not only was he wrangling with the task of completing his Napoleon biography and his wife's failing health, but the banking crisis of 1825 struck midway through the novel's composition, leading Scott to take an abnormally long time to complete it (by Scott's standards): five months.³² Indeed, writing in his journal on the 12th of February, Scott recorded:

Now I have not the slightest idea how the story is to be wound up to a catastrophe. I am just in the same case as I used to be when I lost myself in former days in some country to which I was a stranger—I always pushed for the pleasantest road and either found or made it the nearest. It is the same in writing. I never could lay down a plan—or having laid it down I never could adhere to it; the action of composition always dilated some passages and abridged or omitted others and personages were rendered important or insignificant not according to their agency in the original conception of the plan but according to the success or otherwise with which I was able to bring them out.³³

Scott's composition of his novels were often ad hoc, although he rarely displayed such self-doubt in composition. Pushing for the 'pleasantest road' rather than tailoring his texts to his audience's desires was abnormal. In similar terms in a letter to J. B. S. Morritt, Scott told him 'I am hammering away at a bit of a story from the old affair of the Diablerie at *Woodstock* in the Long Parliament times. I don't like it much.'³⁴ In previous

³² J.H. Alexander, David Hewitt, and Alison Lumsden, 'Essay On The Text' in Sir Walter Scott, *Woodstock*, ed. Tony Inglis with J.H. Alexander, David Hewitt, and Alison Lumsden, (Edinburgh; Edinburgh University Press, 2009), p. 430.

³³ Scott, 'Sunday, 12 February 1826' in *The Journal of Sir Walter Scott*, p. 86.

³⁴ Scott, 'To J.B.S Morritt, 6 February 1826' in *The Letters of Sir Walter Scott*, vol. 9, p. 412.

instances where Scott had disliked composing a novel, he paused its production for a period, such as with his turn to *The Talisman* when the progress of *The Betrothed* pained him. Indeed, in one isolated incident with *The Betrothed*, Scott even destroyed and suppressed material, apologising to Ballantyne that he had not sent it to him for his verdict, then accepted Constable's offer of 'a fallow'.³⁵ In this instance, Scott insisted to Ballantyne that *Woodstock* 'shall be done however & you will be regularly supplied with copy were it written with my hearts blood'.³⁶ Indeed, despite his handing the manuscript to Ballantyne on the 1st of April 1826, it was not published until the 28th of April due to Constable's bankruptcy. Evidently when profit was not funnelling to Scott, Constable, or Ballantyne, but to their creditors, the urgency for a new Waverley novel was lessened.³⁷

Such a mixture of concerns and obligations bled into Scott's novel and, in particular, the composition of his characters. When reading the character of Henry Lee, it is difficult not to see echoes of Scott's own life at the time mirrored in the old aristocrat. Indeed, Scott had long borrowed from his own person for the composition of both his novels' and paratextual characters, with Oldbuck from *The Antiquary* a notable example. Henry Lee was bankrupted by the English Civil War having stayed loyal to the Royal Family and lived under the threat of financial catastrophe, fearing what would happen to the daughter he lives with. Facing looming bankruptcy himself and the potential death of his wife, Scott experienced similar anxieties.³⁸ Additionally, the rise of a resurgent Reform movement around 1825 after its suppression after Peterloo in 1819, caused concern for Scott, leading his sense of political duty to colour the character of Lee.³⁹ Scott's pride despite his bankruptcy is mirrored in Lee's declaration that:

³⁵ For Scott accepting 'a fallow', and apologising to Ballantyne for destroying the original manuscripts of *The Betrothed*, see Scott, 'To James Ballantyne, 11 November 1824' in *Ibid.*, vol. 8, pp. 416–417.

³⁶ Scott, 'To James Ballantyne, 20 March 1826' in *Ibid.*, vol. 9, p. 475.

³⁷ Alexander, Hewitt, and Lumsden, 'Essay On The Text' in Scott, *Woodstock*, pp. 444–445.

³⁸ Scott had started writing *Woodstock* in November 1825, whilst Lady Charlotte Scott's health began deteriorating sharply in October. This was likely due to asthma, heart problems, dropsy and a potential opium addiction. Her health deteriorated even further in mid-March of 1826, before she eventually passed away on the 14th of May. This period almost wholly covers Scott's writing of *Woodstock*. See Sutherland, pp. 288, 289, 307–308.

³⁹ For examples of the similarities between Scott and his character of Henry Lee including his bankruptcy, an early display of royal loyalty, and his small family, see Scott, *Woodstock*, pp. 19–25.

I have lived at the lodge too long; and let me tell you, I had left it in scorn long since, but for the orders of one whom I may yet live to do service to. I will take nothing from the usurpers, be their name Rump or Cromwell—be they one devil or Legion—I will not take from them an old cap to cover my grey hairs—a cast cloak to protect my frail limbs from the cold. They shall not say they have, by their unwilling bounty, made Abraham rich—I will live, as I will die, the Loyal Lee.⁴⁰

Scott's own declaration that he 'will involve no friend either rich or poor—My own right hand shall do it—Else will I be done in the slang language and *undone* in common parlance' is remarkably similar to Lee's statement.⁴¹ Indeed, early in the novel, Lee asks 'Will not these people expel us from the only shelter we have left—dilapidate what remains of royal property under my charge—make the palace of princes into a den of thieves, and then wipe their mouths and thank God, as if they had been doing alms deed?'⁴² This is almost an identical situation to that of Scott's. With bankruptcy looming in late 1825, Scott feared for the loss of Abbotsford if his creditors demanded it as part of his repayments, as well as the shame that would bring to his family, and a potential exile in the Shetlands.⁴³

The connections, though, extend beyond this. According to Gary Kelly, each of the individual factions in *Woodstock*, unbeknownst to Scott's audience, represent shards of Scott's own person during the period of composition. Lee represents Scott's Tory loyalty to the British crown (and his hope of redemption from his situation through monarchical loyalty) and a proud man going through bankruptcy; Everard represents the

⁴⁰ Ibid., p. 139.

⁴¹ It is impossible to determine which statement Scott wrote first, Lee's declaration or Scott's own in his journal on his situation. Since the journal entry for that comment is on Sunday 22nd January, 1826, it is fair to assume Scott had made the connections between his own situation and his character. Indeed, the whole novel only took five months for Scott to complete, starting on 30th of October, 1825. Scott was first made aware of his financial difficulties on November 18th, 1825, learning more as the month went on. The dates of Scott's financial concerns, then, align with his composition of *Woodstock*. Another of Scott's statements that echoes Lee is in when he admitted: 'I am ashamed to owe debts I cannot pay but I am not ashamed of being classed with those whose rank I belong. The disgrace is being an actual bankrupt not in being made a legal one'. See Scott, 'Sunday, 22 January 1826' and 'Thursday, 16 February 1826' in *The Journal of Sir Walter Scott*, pp. 65, 91–92; and for a discussion of the onset of the financial crash and Scott's awareness of it, see Sutherland, pp. 281–288.

⁴² Scott, *Woodstock*, p. 20.

⁴³ Indeed, the deliberate similarities between Scott and Lee even extend to the fact that both, unable to ride horses any longer, rode a small pony, like Lee's 'Pixie', cementing the duality between author and character. See Sutherland, pp. 299–301; and Scott, *Woodstock*, pp. 273–274.

disciplined and principled model of masculinity Scott sought to promote and thought of as himself in facing his obligations (with Kerneguy representative of a masculinity Scott sought to discourage); and the burghers of *Woodstock*, according to Kelly, are representative of the bourgeoisie and lower classes, whose loyalties are split and for whom the Royalists and Republicans vie, mirroring Scott's political anxieties in the 1820s.⁴⁴

However, it is Kelly's discussion of the character of Cromwell that is most fascinating when compared to the events of Scott's own life. Accordingly, Cromwell is representative of Scott's own views on subjectivity, much as Byron had constructed in *Don Juan*. Kelly explains that all of the characters in the novel are manipulated directly or indirectly by the '*diabolus ex machina*' Cromwell.⁴⁵ Wildrake, for instance, following his meeting with Cromwell stated that 'I have seen the devil'.⁴⁶ Kelly demonstrates that Cromwell's brief emotional lapse on seeing Charles I's portrait, reveals to Wildrake his internal desires to be regarded as a great man like the former king. Kelly argues that Cromwell, identical to his wearing of chainmail beneath his clothing to ward off assassination like the one Wildrake attempts, also wears mental and emotional armour against his mind and others who may seek to penetrate him.⁴⁷

I would extend this by suggesting that, much like Cromwell's chainmail, Scott used anonymity as his own armour against the penetration of his audience into his life. As a private man, Scott sought a different model of fame to Byron's. Scott had rather built a celebrity based upon the fact that his audience could not (and must not) know who he was. Their fascination with Scott was not due to seeing themselves as privileged readers who glimpsed behind each text via their knowledge of Scott's life, but rather, as my discussion of Scott's fan-mail has demonstrated, that they were part of a game in which identity and truth was deliberately and playfully mobile and responsive to the new culture of divided readerships, allowing them to self-consciously play the same game. Cromwell's brief exposure is representative of Scott's fears of revelation. In that moment, Cromwell is naked and vulnerable to Wildrake. Having his identity revealed (thus his armour removed), Scott would himself be forced to confront the possibility of his brand being destroyed by his unmasking, the game he played for so long ending, and the direct intrusion and interpretation of his audience into his own life as a newly publicised figure, just like Byron. Scott thus encouraged speculation into the identity of the

⁴⁴ Kelly, pp. 165–166.

⁴⁵ Ibid., p. 169.

⁴⁶ Scott, *Woodstock*, p. 97.

⁴⁷ Kelly, p. 169.

writer of *Waverley* to playfully engage with his audience whilst having a plausibly deniable alter-ego constructed to protect his identity from intrusion or to taint his novels with readers' knowledge of his life.⁴⁸ Scott's identity was thus a secret never to be found out. Just as Cromwell managed to directly and indirectly manipulate the characters of *Woodstock* through his hidden subjectivity, Scott, as the 'Author of Waverley,' could directly manipulate his constructed characters in the Waverley novels, and indirectly guide his audience through meta-narrative and his novels' characters.

Kerneguy, additionally, offers another dynamic in *Woodstock* to Scott's potential unmasking with his comments on anonymity. Speaking of his need for the pseudonym 'Kerneguy', Charles II states 'Why, man, I have scarce had my tongue unchained to-day; and to talk with that northern twang, besides the fatigue of being obliged to speak every word in character,—Gad, it's like walking as the galley slaves do on the Continent, with a twenty-four-pound shot chained to their legs—they may drag it along, but they cannot move with comfort.'⁴⁹ The comment is intriguing when taken in comparison to Scott's career thus far. Pseudonymity, to the king, is restrictive, like a 'twenty-four-pound shot' chained to his leg. Throughout most of Scott's career we see that the 'Author of Waverley' allowed Scott to play with his audience, manipulate his publishers, and avoid backlash against his experimental novels (initially), thus, in contrast to Kerneguy, allowing Scott enormous creative freedom. The conflict in Cromwell, coupled to Kerneguy's dismay at having to act a part, thus place the characters as oddly similar in that their failings arise out of their masking of their true identity: Charles' cavalier frivolousness arises from the fact he lacks true depth of character but Cromwell is monstrous in his duality. When compared to Scott's use of pseudonymity, it provides us with a glimpse into Scott's deeper concerns surrounding his own role as an unknown novelist.⁵⁰ The failings of both Charles and Cromwell due to their artificial characters raises the question that Scott may be concerned about his own play with personae. In a period of deep political and financial turmoil, present in both 1651 and in Scott's era,

⁴⁸ As I have demonstrated, especially in my discussion of *The Antiquary*, Scott sought to encourage and accept multiple interpretations of his novels.

⁴⁹ Scott, *Woodstock*, p. 228.

⁵⁰ Indeed, Scott was during the composition of *Woodstock*, concerned that his anonymity was slowly eroding as more and more people came to know his disguise. In his journal he recorded that 'For myself the magic wand of the Unknown is shiverd in his grasp. He must henceforth be termed the Too Well Known'. See Scott, 'Sunday, 18 December 1825' in *The Journal of Sir Walter Scott*, p. 40.

Scott could be beginning to consider whether his pseudonymity is too superficial and potentially a silly tactic to utilise in such dangerous times.

After all, the real hero of *Woodstock* is neither Charles nor Cromwell, or even Morton, but Alice Lee. In the face of Kerneguy's (or Charles') play, when he teases her about the King, Alice straightforwardly (if unknowingly) insults him.⁵¹ Later, when his identity is revealed to Alice, Charles propositions her sexually, suggesting that 'ever since the time that old Henry built these walls, priests and prelates, as well as nobles and statesmen, have been accustomed to see a Fair Rosamond rule the heart of an affectionate monarch, and console him for the few hours of constraint and state which he must bestow upon some angry and jealous Eleanor' and that '[their] offspring rank with the nobles of the land'.⁵² In response, Alice pointedly insults him again.⁵³ In the first instance, Alice has failed to read the acting surface of Kerneguy (not knowing his royalty) and been straight with her own opinions. In the second, knowing Charles's identity, she is no different despite his position. Her straightforward criticism, despite his being a monarch, ultimately leads the king to praise her and make her a defining factor in his ultimate reform. It is her authenticity and directness that leads Alice to become the tale's hero. Evidently, it is these virtues that guide the group through such dangerous times. Alice's interventions demonstrate to Kerneguy that, despite his power, her frankness and direct answers are the reforming qualities he must reflect. His personae, Kerneguy, was (although crucial for his survival) a hindrance between their communications.

Woodstock's characters thus indeed represent 'shards' of Scott's own person, as Kelly suggests, although it is also accurate to state that they represent his own dialogue over the condition and future of his own pseudonymity in volatile times. It evidently took effort to maintain the charade.⁵⁴ Kerneguy's comments likely mirror one of Scott's divided opinions on the future of his anonymity. Perhaps, revelation could be liberating. In his journal, Scott asked:

I have long enjoyed the [the public's favour] and something in my breast tells me my evil genius will not overwhelm me if I stand by myself. Should I not? I have no enemies—many attachd friends—the popular ascendancy which I have

⁵¹ See Scott, *Woodstock*, pp. 247–248.

⁵² See *Ibid.*, p. 287.

⁵³ See *Ibid.*, pp. 287–288.

⁵⁴ Scott having Ballantyne copy out his manuscripts, in order that the workers at Ballantyne & Co. would not recognise his own handwriting, is one example of the amount of effort Scott had to exert to remain unknown to his audience.

maintained is of the kind which is rather improved by frequent appearances before the public.⁵⁵

Thus *Woodstock* displays Scott's personal concerns over his potential reception in the likely event that, due to his financial circumstances, he is no longer protected by the armature of the 'Author of Waverley'. Scott's debate over subjectivity in *Woodstock*, represented by the conflict in Cromwell and Kerneguy's distaste for charade, juxtaposed against the heroic and authentic Alice Lee, thus displays the intricate nexus of conditions upon which Scott's anonymity, and thus his games of fluid personae and truth, relied upon. Like Kerneguy, Scott is considering that by revealing himself he could reform his relationship with audience; rather than the theatre of Kerneguy, he could be guided by Alice (or an audience, even one with a powerful female proportion) and have a new relationship based on authenticity. The world of Romantic literary culture and reception, tied to market fluctuations, pressed into the worlds of the Waverley novels which then displayed Scott's own anxieties through the composition of his divided, complex characters. Whereas Scott had presented shards of his person through paratextual personae, here he allows them to be communicated by *Woodstock*'s characters. Scott's composition process in *Woodstock* then, was deeply affected by his personal contexts, the implications of how he had navigated his popularity throughout his novel-writing career and, particularly, his fear of revelation. Accordingly, this could lead to the possibility of losing his audience (and thus his inability to reimburse his debts), to their unbridled intrusion, judgement, and speculation upon Scott's own personal affairs (something his various pseudonyms had protected him from), or alternatively a triumph of authenticity like Alice. At this stage, Scott did not know, but he was considering.

Readers And *Woodstock*

Scott's concerns about his own status as a novel writer are deepened further by his composition of the dichotomy between Everard and the concealed King Charles II or 'Kerneguy'. As I have considered in Chapter Four regarding Waverley's character, Scott was persistently concerned about the effects of an enlarged print market on the formation of young minds, even justifying his texts based on the education they can provide for youths in the preface to *Peperil of the Peak*. However, unlike in *Waverley*,

⁵⁵ Scott, 'Friday, 20 January 1826' in *The Journal of Sir Walter Scott*, p. 62.

Kerneguy's character, when compared to Everard's, not only demonstrates the effects of a proper literary education, but also, I contend, represents Scott's concerns regarding his novels: a concern arising out of his shaken confidence surrounding the consequences of the 1825 crash.

In Kerneguy, Scott paints a similarly undisciplined youth to Waverley whose loose morality is the result of a lack of guided reading. Examples of this are as his frequent attempts to persuade Alice into a sexual but non-marital relationship, as discussed earlier. Such rakish behaviour though, like Waverley's ineptitude, is linked to his literary taste. When Henry Lee offers to read Kerneguy the cautionary play of *Richard II*, a tale of a weak king and his outmoded advisor John of Gaunt, in an effort to both educate the young lord and refine his literary taste, Kerneguy leaves to explore the grounds.⁵⁶ He then privately muses that Shakespeare was 'a fellow as much out of date as [Lee], to read me to death with five acts of a historical play, or chronicle, "being the piteous Life and Death of Richard the Second."' ⁵⁷ Shirking the classics of Shakespeare in favour of a trend, Kerneguy professes his taste more so for the 'clever fellow' Sir William D'Avenant's plays, a popular, bombastic playwright of the day.⁵⁸ As Kelly suggests, the claim of D'Avenant that he was the illegitimate son of Shakespeare was just the type of rakish tale the young libertine king would revel in.⁵⁹ Lee's love of Shakespeare meantime is another connection between the character and Scott, whose highlighting of Charles's problematic admiration of D'Avenant exemplifies his own concerns that his novels, unlike the immutable Shakespeare, may also be just another fashion.

In contrast, Everard is painted as exactly the opposite of the idealistic and innocent Waverley or, indeed, Kerneguy. Dani Napton and Stephanie Russo state that Everard is 'no political ingénue but an experienced soldier who knows his political choices have cost him his love yet his concerns remain socially focused: "If I have sacrificed my private happiness, it is that my country may enjoy liberty of conscience, and personal freedom"' ⁶⁰ Instead of being swept along by events, acting as a Waverley-esque spectator, Everard is crucial in shaping them by involving himself in the revolution, hunting the King, and, as we shall see, confronting and reforming him.

⁵⁶ See Scott, *Woodstock*, pp. 250–251.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 251.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 274–275.

⁵⁹ Kelly, p. 172.

⁶⁰ See Scott, *Woodstock*, p. 72; and Dani Napton and Stephanie Russo, 'Place in Charlotte Smith's *The Banished Man* and Walter Scott's *Woodstock*' in *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900*, Volume 52, Number 4, (Autumn 2012), pp. 747–763 (pp. 749–750).

Crucially, though, Everard's portrayal as an upstanding man is due to his literary education. In Chapter Twenty-four, when Everard declares that he 'know[s] verses written by a friend of the Commonwealth, and those, too, of a dramatic character, which weighed in an impartial scale, might equal even the poetry of Shakespeare' he is challenged by Kerneguy and Henry Lee to prove it.⁶¹ In response, Everard quotes (without naming the author) Milton's *Comus* (1634), a masque that mirrors Kerneguy's own attempted seduction of the chaste Alice Lee.⁶² After the recitation, Lee praises the poetry: 'Yes—I do call that poetry—though it were written by a Presbyterian, or by an Anabaptist either.'⁶³ Kerneguy then identifies the author as Milton, resulting in the pair rebutting Everard, declaiming it as written by a 'parasite' and 'hypocrite'.⁶⁴ This is a crucial scene in terms of Scott's views on reading: he is attempting to demonstrate the virtues of separating style from politics, which is why Lee and Charles both appear as partisans unable to see through their own bias to beauty. However, by writing *Woodstock*, a novel so nakedly supportive of the British royal family (demonstrated by Charles's triumphal return at the novel's conclusion), during a period of increasing democratic gains by the reform movement (the culmination being the Reform Act of 1832), Scott is himself being partisan. The situations represent an intersection for Scott, displaying two competing concerns he must face. As we shall see, Scott indeed sought fame in posterity for himself. However, evidently, he was also torn by the competing loyalties of remaining faithful to his Tory politics and to the royal family in an increasingly tumultuous age. The scenario can thus be seen as Scott attempting to demonstrate the virtues to his readership, current and deferred, of viewing literature based solely on beauty and ignoring its author's (potentially 'The Author Of Waverley's') political opinions. Scott thus constructs this scene with his audience in mind, demonstrating to them their role as impartial adjudicator of literature, whilst the author's role is to respond to the world he is a part of.

Consequently, Scott demonstrates the results of unbiased, principled reading in Everard's actions. He and the King ultimately clash again, as Kerneguy demands the satisfaction of a duel with Everard which is interrupted by Doctor Rochecliffe and Alice. When Alice leaves the decision of a duel to Everard, he turns to Kerneguy:

⁶¹ Scott, *Woodstock*, p. 277.

⁶² See *Ibid.*, p. 278.

⁶³ *Ibid.*

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 279.

“Sir, you have heard the lady’s declaration, with such feelings, doubtless, of gratitude, as the case eminently demands.—As her poor kinsman, and an unworthy suitor, sir, I presume to yield my interest in her to you; and, as I will never be the means of giving her pain, I trust you will not think I act unworthily in retracting the letter which gave you the trouble of attending this place at this hour.—Alice,” he said, turning his head towards her, “Farewell, Alice, at once, and for ever!”⁶⁵

In deference to Everard’s humility, Kerneguy reveals himself as Charles Stewart, praising Everard as ‘we are in the hands, I am satisfied, of a man of honour’.⁶⁶ Dropping his claim to Alice, Charles ‘progresses from an equivocal engagement with monarchical responsibilities to an acceptance of his sovereign duties, choosing to embrace them rather than the object of his personal desires.’⁶⁷ After fleeing to France, Charles returns, triumphantly taking his rightful place as King of England, Scotland and Ireland, demonstrating that he is reformed and putting country before personal desire. Charles is ultimately reformed as a man of duty, by his experiences with Everard, a man deeply saturated in the national canon and willing to consider, regardless of politics, the value of literature.

Scott, as in *Waverley*, demonstrates the power of a guided literary education in forming minds, particularly leaders. However, Scott’s invocation of Shakespeare as an example of such educating literature betrays a deeper concern regarding his own texts. In his journal around this period, Scott frequently contrasts himself to Shakespeare, admitting that:

When I want to express a sentiment which I feel strongly, I find the phrase in Shakespeare or thee [Robert Burns]. The blockheads talk of my being like Shakespeare—not fit to tie his brogues.⁶⁸

If Scott is, by his own admission, not fit to tie Shakespeare’s brogues, then he draws into question whether his texts will prove canonical or if they are worthy of shaping young minds, as he so boldly claims in the preface to *Peveril of the Peak*. Scott thus engages with Shakespeare and Milton in order to reflect upon his own concerns about the current state of taste and literary standards, especially in regards to fashions like his own

⁶⁵ Ibid., p. 311.

⁶⁶ Ibid., p. 312.

⁶⁷ Napton and Russo, p. 758.

⁶⁸ Scott, ‘Monday, 11 December 1826’ in *The Journal of Sir Walter Scott*, p. 252.

novels, a supposedly 'low' genre.

Scott thus continues a theme that he had established with *Waverley* in his demonstration of the value of literature. However, his journal betrays that his inclusion of the theme reveals his uncertainty about the value of his work. This period of financial insecurity and shaken confidence, started by the crash of 1825 and continuing until his death in 1832, was also the period when he wrote 'Get a good name and you may write trash'.⁶⁹ Scott's composition is thus impacted by his own precarious financial position, the unstable guarantee of his anonymity, and a shifting literary marketplace, just as much as by his cultural anxieties over an expanded print market and its effects on the public's minds. With such unsteady ground, it is little wonder that Scott began to contemplate what Shakespeare had achieved and what he had yet to: fame in posterity. After all, 'books, which, long since converted into cartridges, had made more noise in the world at their final exit, than during the space which had intervened betwixt that and their first publication'.⁷⁰

Scott And Wordsworth

In a discussion of what Andrew Bennett labels the 'Romantic culture of posterity', Wordsworth's ideology represented the standard of the period.⁷¹ However, as I have demonstrated with Byron, the experience of contemporary success evidently encouraged a very different conception of a route to posthumous fame and the role of the author in the production of texts. This is also true for Scott.

Wordsworth privileged the author as a sublime creator who 'as far as he is great and at the same time original, has had the task of creating the taste by which he is to be enjoyed'.⁷² Thus, the writer composes his works in accordance with the powers of their own mind, discounting the input or views of their contemporary public, in order to fashion their own audience who will enjoy their work at some point in the future, likely posthumously. The creative process is thus a closed activity, whilst contemporary reception is an unimportant adjunct. Summing up Wordsworth's viewpoint, Scott recorded that 'Wordsworth has a system which disposes him to take the bull by the horns and offend public taste, which right or wrong will always be the taste of the public, yet he

⁶⁹ Scott, 'Wednesday, 29 April 1829' in *Ibid.*, p. 554.

⁷⁰ Scott, *Woodstock*, p. 297.

⁷¹ See Bennett, *Culture of Posterity*, pp. 1–4.

⁷² Wordsworth, 'Essay Supplementary To The Preface', p. 80.

could be popular if he would'.⁷³ As this thesis outlines, Scott had a different creative process which actively considered the idea of contemporary audiences as the defining influence on his texts. He also held a very different view of posterity.

Indeed, the preface to *The Fortunes of Nigel* (1822) outlines the ideas that have built and continued Scott's success, a radical departure from Wordsworthian notions:

No one shall find me rowing against the stream. I care not who knows it—I write for the public amusement; and though I will never aim at popularity by what I think unworthy means, I will not, on the other hand, be pertinacious in the defence of my own errors against the voice of the public.⁷⁴

Likewise, later in the 'Epistle', he claims that:

The utmost extent of kindness between the author and the public which can really exist, is, that the world are disposed to be somewhat indulgent to the succeeding works of an original favourite, were it but on account of the habit which the public mind has acquired; while the author very naturally thinks well of *their* taste, who have so literally applauded *his* productions. But I deny there is any call for gratitude, properly so-called, either on one side or other.⁷⁵

Scott thus does not defend any errors in the face of public criticism as the public will always be right. Additionally, since they both indulge each other, neither his audience nor himself need display any gratitude to one another: it is implicitly understood that Scott will be indulged so long as he also indulges his audience. He expresses identical attitudes in his journal even following the 1825 crash. In 1827, when composing *The Chronicles Of The Canongate*, Scott records that 'The public favour may wain indeed but it has not yet faild as yet and I must not be too anxious about that possibility'.⁷⁶ In 1828, Scott muses:

Yet, who can warrant the continuance of popularity? Old Corri, who entered into many projects and could never set the sails of a windmill so as to catch the *aura*

⁷³ Scott, 'Monday, 26 May 1828' in Scott, *The Journal of Sir Walter Scott*, p. 482.

⁷⁴ Scott, 'Introductory Epistle' in *The Fortunes of Nigel*, p. 6.

⁷⁵ Ibid., p. 9.

⁷⁶ Scott, 'Wednesday, 25 July 1827' in *The Journal of Sir Walter Scott*, p. 333.

popularis, used to say that he believed that were he to turn baker it would put a bread out of fashion. I have had the better luck to dress my sails to every wind. And so blow on, God's wind, and spin round, whirligig.⁷⁷

As I have considered in *The Antiquary*, Scott, in his various prefaces and his fan-mail, actively invited his audience into his texts as a creative influence, using his imagining and understanding of their desires alongside direct suggestions provided by editors like Ballantyne, as a guide by which to construct his texts.⁷⁸ With such statements, Scott is definitively—and publicly—stating that audiences must be the central determining factor in the construction of his novels. Rather than rejecting contemporary reception as artistically flawed, as Wordsworth does in his attempt to sculpt an audience, Scott embraces it, 'dress[ing] my sails to [their] every wind'. If he fails to capture audience desire, it is not that their desire is wrong, but rather that he must accept his 'own errors against the voice of the public'. It would be Scott who had failed.

However, as I have shown (especially with *The Betrothed*), Scott also utilises his proximity to and success in the Romantic literary market as a creative influence, a success that is constructed upon audience demand. Mayer highlights that, in letters advising Southey to switch to Constable as a publisher, Scott admits that:

I have always found advantage in keeping on good terms with several of the trade, but never suffering any one of them to consider me as a monopoly. They are very like farmers, who thrive best at a high rent; and, in general, take most pains to sell a book that has cost them money to purchase.⁷⁹

Mayer suggests that Scott's correspondence with Southey and Wordsworth illuminate 'issues of authorship and fame, and they do so in the context of much attention to the economic imperative resulting from the new importance of booksellers and reviewers, with Scott in some ways ceding "the laurel" to the Lake poets while insisting on the importance and the validity of "the shop."' ⁸⁰ The implications of Scott's letters to Southey

⁷⁷ Scott, here, refers to Natale/Domenico Corri, who was a composer at the Theatre Royal in Edinburgh, of which Scott had stake in. See Scott, 'Monday, 16 June 1828' in *Ibid.*, p. 491.

⁷⁸ It is important to note, though, editorial intervention geared towards audience desire was only heeded by Scott depending upon who provided it. Murray and Blackwood's intervention was obviously rejected in *The Black Dwarf*, whilst Ballantyne was always trusted as a reliable barometer of audience demand.

⁷⁹ Scott, 'To Robert Southey, November 1807' in *The Letters of Sir Walter Scott*, vol. 1, p. 388.

⁸⁰ Mayer, *Walter Scott*, p. 45.

in Mayer's analysis, therefore, is that Scott utilised his proximity to the literary marketplace in his own success (rather than Wordsworthian standards of taste: the 'laurel'), judging his worth based on contemporary acclaim and sales. He determined that a close involvement with the machinery of the print industry in the construction of his texts was a boon to achieving such success. Therefore, Scott's own creative procedure actively utilised his contemporary print industry, including tools such as his publishers, as a factor in building his texts, thus making it a far more open process than Wordsworth's.

Scott thus privileges the idea a contemporary audience and direct input from the print industry as creative pillars in the construction of his works through a cooperative, multi-voiced compositional process. If his novel is unsuccessful, it is he who has failed, not his audience or his publishers. Scott's model of authorship (built upon contemporary acclaim) is thus radically different to Wordsworth's, and this extends to his views on posterity. In his idealising of the author as the sole creator of a text and rejecting contemporary fame in favour of 'creating the taste by which he is to be enjoyed', Wordsworth acts as the best example of Bennett's claim about the role of identity in 'the culture of posterity': that '[i]n the first place, the question of the role and identity of the author becomes increasingly important in literary and aesthetic thinking during the eighteenth century. By the early nineteenth century, authorial identity has become crucial to the shape of the more advanced modern poetry.'⁸¹ Scott's fluid sense of truth and authorial personae indicates that he cannot be simply aligned with this culture. In *The Fortunes of Nigel's* preface, Clutterbuck asks the 'Author of Waverley' about his fame. The 'Author' replies:

My fame? I will answer you as a very ingenious, able, and experienced friend, when counsel for the notorious Jem MacCoul, replied to the opposite side of the bar, when they laid weight on his client's refusing to answer certain queries, which they said every man who had a regard for his reputation would not hesitate to reply to. "My client," said he—by the way, Jem was standing behind him at the time, and a rich scene it was—"is so unfortunate to have no regard for his reputation; and I should deal very uncandidly with the Court, should I say he had any that was worth his attention." I am, though from very different reasons,

⁸¹ Bennett, *Culture of Posterity*, p. 2.

in Jem's happy state of indifference. Let fame follow those who have a substantial shape. A shadow—and an impersonal author is nothing better—can cast no shade.⁸²

If believed, then Scott cares little for his actual name living on in any form. This would be supported by his use of anonymity and pseudonyms. Later, though, 'The Author Of Waverley' states that 'Horace himself had expected not to survive in all his works—I may hope to live in some of mine; *non omnis moriar*.'⁸³ In the tenuous hope that he *may* 'live on in some of' his works, Scott is echoing a statement he made in his journal that '[t]he publick favour is my only lottery'; or asking 'who can warrant the continuance of popularity?' and answering by comparing the public favour to sailing winds which he must trim his sails to meet: contemporary fame is arbitrary, but there are ways of attempting to catch it. He did so via two methods: by voluminous output and by actively utilising the idea of his contemporary audience as a creative fulcrum and as a barometer of his success. Such a view runs contrary to the Wordsworthian position, and in turn the Wordsworthian ideal of the creative separation of the artist from his readers.

Central to Scott's alternative view of authorial creativity is his conception of divided Romantic audiences. In his discussion of the role of Scott's prefaces, Scott Simpkins suggests that poets like Shelley and Wordsworth 'were more concerned with the diminution of their power as controllers of their texts, than with giving in to dictates of popular taste. To admit that the reader essentially has the final word means that the person who set that word in motion has abrogated his or her position as textual master.'⁸⁴ The preface, therefore, is not a contract between author and reader, dictating the text's reception, but rather a suggestion for the audience to read it in a certain way. Jane Millgate proposes that, in his prefaces, 'Scott made himself master of the apparatus of editorial possession' via his deployment of the 'framing strategies of the editor' through his use of personae such as Clutterbuck.⁸⁵ Clutterbuck is, after all, a supposed 'editor' of the Waverley novels, lending the authority of a critical antiquary to his debates with 'The Author Of Waverley'.

⁸² Scott, 'Introductory Epistle' in *The Fortunes of Nigel*, p. 8.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, p. 16.

⁸⁴ Simpkins, p. 19.

⁸⁵ Jane Millgate, *Walter Scott: The Making of the Novelist*, (Toronto; University of Toronto Press, 1984), pp. 7, 13.

In this, Scott performs a very complex manoeuvre. Clutterbuck could indeed, as Millgate argues, lend weight to Scott's views via his role as an editor (pushing an audience to read Scott's texts in the ways Clutterbuck's and 'The Author's' debates suggest). Yet Scott's audience, as I have demonstrated, were very aware that Clutterbuck and 'The Author' were products of the same creator.⁸⁶ Scott's audience were aware that they were, as McGann states, 'entering a house of fictions', and it was a house built by many hands, including those of the large audience that Scott includes in such paratextual manoeuvres. These characters were the product of Scott's engagement with audience criticism (Clutterbuck as a reaction to the Covenanter controversy, for instance). Thus, the real editors of Scott's work are his audiences, represented mosaically by his various prefatory characters (who were, also, simultaneously, of his own imagination). Scott welcomed his audience as a creative consideration in the composition of his prefaces. He does not dictate audience interpretation in his prefaces, but accepts (and incorporates) it as the guidance for his own composition and thus for future readers of the Waverley novels.⁸⁷ Rather than promoting himself as an 'all powerful' writer, who composes purely through the power of his own mind, Scott obscures his identity through personae to privilege reader engagement as the crucial means by which he might 'live on' in his texts. Rather than a Wordsworthian 'egotistical sublime', Scott's path to literary immortality evidently lies in his understanding and incorporation of audience desire.

Thus, much like Byron (and, as we shall see, Landon), Scott does not attempt to guarantee himself living on in posterity via a manifesto, but instead embraces the 'lottery' of contemporary acclaim in the hope that it will also translate into posthumous success. Whilst this is based upon his experience as a popular author, it is in direct contrast to Wordsworth's viewpoint of neglecting contemporary readers in favour of sculpting the tastes of an audience in the future. Instead, Scott embraces the idea of his audiences as his central creative impulse. Scott accepts that 'posterity' will be composed of readers just as real as his contemporary audience, and his deep connections with his own readers led him to think differently about the acts of reading and composition *per se*. He may not know his readers personally, now or in the future, but they will always act as creative partners in the 'Joint Stock Company' of the Author of Waverley.

⁸⁶ As I have shown, Scott's audience were made aware that Scott's paratextual characters were the fictional products of one man's mind in his frequent allusions to their lineage as 'sons' of the Eidolon or 'Author Of Waverley'.

⁸⁷ For a further discussion of how Scott differs from Wordsworth in his handling of history and transmission, see Takanashi, pp. 293–298.

The Great Unknown, Known

In *The Chronicles Of The Canongate*'s preface in 1827, Scott opened with a description of a famed Italian actor who, at the urging of critics, 'played Harlequin barefaced, but was considered on all hands as having made a total failure' and then questioning whether 'the Author of Waverley is now about to incur a risk of the same kind, and endanger his popularity by having laid aside his incognito'. Indeed, justifying the actor's failure, Scott suggests 'He had lost the audacity which a sense of incognito bestowed, and with it all the reckless play of raillery which gave vivacity to his original acting. He cursed his advisers, and resumed his grotesque vizard, but, it is said, without ever being able to regain the careless and successful levity which the consciousness of the disguise had formerly bestowed'.⁸⁸ The instance represents a literal 'moment of truth'. Scott admits that since his identity had been revealed at a dinner party he attended by Lord Meadowbank, the revelation was unlikely to remain within the party's walls. Therefore, without 'the slightest intention of choosing the time and place in which the disclosure has finally made' at the party, he had to end the speculation over the 'Author's' identity that had raged since 1814 in his preface.⁸⁹ This revelation closed the creative space within which he had toyed with his audience through a sense of mobile truth and fluid personae.⁹⁰ Revealing his motives for his anonymity and pseudonymity, Scott admits: 'It was the humour or caprice of the time'.⁹¹ He continued:

When I made the discovery,—for to me it was one,—that by amusing myself with composition, which I felt a delightful occupation, I could also give pleasure to others, and became aware that literary pursuits were likely to engage in future a considerable portion of my time, I felt some alarm that I might acquire those habits of jealousy and fretfulness which have lessened, and even degraded, the character of the children of imagination, and rendered them, by

⁸⁸ See Sir Walter Scott, 'Introduction' in *The Chronicles of The Canongate*, ed. Claire Lamont, (Edinburgh; Edinburgh University Press, 2000), p. 3.

⁸⁹ See *Ibid.*, p. 4.

⁹⁰ For an exploration of why Scott refers to actors' masks and the character of Harlequin when forced to reveal his own identity to his audience, see Claire Lamont, 'Walter Scott: Anonymity and the Unmasking of Harlequin' in *Authorship, Commerce and the Public: Scenes of Writing 1750-1850*, ed. Emma J. Clery, Caroline Franklin, & Peter Garside, (London; Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), pp. 54–66.

⁹¹ Scott, 'Introduction' in *The Chronicles of The Canongate*, p. 9.

petty squabbles and mutual irritability, the laughing stock of the people of the world.⁹²

Scott's anonymity thus existed partly to amuse himself, whilst 'giv[ing] pleasure to' his audience (through the playful paratextual myths of the novels' creation and his novels), and to allow his audience to interpret his texts as they wished, unguided by the possibility of his 'jealousy and fretfulness which have lessened, and even degraded, the character of the children of imagination'. In his 'Introduction', Scott grasps the nature of his veiled celebrity, one so different to Byron, although identical in their employment of audience and the machinery of the Romantic literary marketplace as creative partners in the construction of their works, though he cedes to Lady Stuart that 'the joke had lasted long enough and I was tired of it'.⁹³ Such sentiments echo the debate over anonymity in *Woodstock* between Cromwell and Kerneguy's respective hidden characters. Whereas part of Scott thus wished to carry on playing, another was 'tired of it', concluding publicly in *The Chronicles of the Canongate* that he had realised his ploy as childish in a period of such tumult.⁹⁴

In such admissions is an encapsulation of Scott's reasons for authorial play, initially based on his own concerns surrounding the novel and his own lifestyle as novelist, developing into concerns about authenticity and his posthumous remembrance. His admissions, though, closed his play with personae and, as such, represent the end of my analysis of Scott's career. The period 1827–1832 represented years of productivity for Scott, but it was one whereby his ability to experiment and play with his audience was curtailed by his revealed identity. Additionally, with the revelation, Scott's relationship with his new publisher, Cadell, and Ballantyne was also changed by their collective need to pay off their debts.⁹⁵ Whilst this stands as a fascinating way in which the conditions of the Romantic literary marketplace altered Scott's works, his creative process and the relationships he formed with the contributing voices in his polyvocal texts (such as that of Ballantyne or audiences) could no longer be described as playful. Therefore, with this study's focus on playful relationships in relation to Romantic literary culture,

⁹² Ibid., pp. 9–10.

⁹³ Scott, 'To Lady Louisa Stuart, 8 March 1827' in *The Letters of Sir Walter Scott*, vol. 10, p. 173.

⁹⁴ This realisation on Scott's part is similar to Charles finally taking up the serious role of Kingship at the end of *Woodstock*.

⁹⁵ For an explanation of Scott's altered relationship with Cadell and Ballantyne in during the writing of *The Fair Maid of Perth*, see A.D. Hook and Donald Mackenzie, 'Essay On The Text' in Sir Walter Scott, *The Fair Maid of Perth*, ed. A.D. Hook and Donald Mackenzie, (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1999), pp. 392–402.

these years are not of particular interest to this thesis.

Conclusion

Scott's career was thus characterised by a consistently engaged relationship with his audience, and with his various publishers. Of his publishing team, only James Ballantyne (and to a lesser extent, John) played a deep role in the creativity of his texts. That is not to say that the others did not shape Scott's career. Scott was continuously concerned with the idea of his audience, and that audience wrote back; in turn, then, those interactions reinforced the ways in which Scott negotiated the implications of his fame, helping him weave the creative fabric of his novels and prefaces. Scott's publishers did not simply interfere: they acted as partners, junior partners perhaps, in the almost industrial scheme that was the production of the novels. Murray and Blackwood's intervention created a dynamic of power that Scott held over Constable throughout his career, though Constable himself was foundational in the marketing of Scott's novels driven by his desire for a streamlined series of novels, thus birthing 'The Author Of Waverley' and pushing Scott to develop the persona in his subsequent prefaces. Without Constable's intercession, Jedediah Cleishbotham may have remained Scott's only example of pseudonymity, meaning the game Scott constructed with his audience was partly due to the mediation of Constable.

Scott's understanding of his contemporary audience remained, throughout his career, the crucial creative fulcrum in Scott's texts. In creating a game of mobile personae and fluid truth, Scott was actively experimenting with and engaging his audience in a cat and mouse game of working out his identity. Ultimately, though, the answer (whilst fascinating) was not the main attraction of the game. Instead, by analysing responses to Scott's works, we can determine that the mosaic quality of Scott's characters (each a product of Scott's understanding of audience engagement) was something his audience revelled in and responded to.

With Scott's business ties to the print industry, the marketplace eventually acted as a negative influence upon his works too. The crash of 1825, driving Scott to the edge of bankruptcy, robbed him of his anonymity and thus the ability to play with his vast and varied audience. The crash, though, prompted Scott's creativity: he began to re-think the nature of the creative interactions that produced his success in ways that were troubled by new doubts about the security of the bonds he formed with readers now and in the future. As with Byron and Landon, Scott did not have the option to simply ignore

or 'rise above' his contemporary audience. This relationship was instead composed, on both sides, by play and mutually-engaged consciousness and consideration.

Case Study Three: Letitia Elizabeth Landon

Chapter Seven: Landon Creating An Audience - *The Improvisatrice* (1824)

Reviewing Landon's first novel in 1831, *The Athenaeum* declared that 'but for "Romance and Reality" in prose, half of our island might never have awoke from their dream that L. E. L. was an avatar of blue eyes, flaxen ringlets, and a susceptible heart!'¹ The statement picks up on a crucial dynamic that shapes Landon's career: the balance in her works between the romance of parts of her audience in their construction surrounding those 'three magical letters "L.E.L."', and the multiple personae she experiments with and which hint at the reality of literary and print culture.² It is thus only by beginning near the end of Landon's career, by acknowledging the critical persona explicit in her understudied novels, that we can truly understand the way Landon simultaneously delivers a product tailored to her understanding of her audiences' demands in her earlier long poems, whilst also subtly subverting their demands through play and critique. Such a balancing act was the crucial dynamic by which Landon successfully negotiated the implications of her popularity in the Romantic period. Whereas critics such as Anne Mellor and Glennis Stephenson have identified Landon's works as subverting Romantic cultural attitudes despite the overwhelming pressure these attitudes placed upon her as a poet, this chapter shall contend that Landon actually thrived due to the unique pressures she encountered from the period by utilising them as constructive principles by which she could shape her works, and both play with, and profit from, her audience.³

Recent critical interventions such as those by Katherine Montweiler, Stephen Behrendt, and Nicholas Mason have questioned the emphasis placed on Landon's relationship to her improvisational characters by offering a counterpoint to the traditional view of Landon as an improvisatrice frustrated by and mercenary to her audience and Romantic culture.⁴ It is to this school, one in which Landon's writings are viewed as

¹ 'Review of *Romance and Reality* by L. E. L.' in *The Athenaeum*, Vol. 215, (10 December 1831), pp. 793–795, quoted in Claire Knowles, 'Celebrity, Femininity and Masquerade: Reading Letitia Landon's *Romance and Reality*' in *European Romantic Review*, Vol. 23, Issue 2, (April 2012), pp. 247–263 (p. 261).

² Quoted in Laman Blanchard, *Life and Literary Remains of L. E. L.*, 2 Vols., (London; Henry Colburn, 1841), vol. 1, p. 32.

³ See Mellor, *Romanticism and Gender*, pp. 2–11, 108–123; Glennis Stephenson, 'Letitia Landon and the Victorian Improvisatrice: The Construction of L.E.L.' in *Victorian Poetry*, Vol. 30, Issue 1, (Spring 1992), pp. 1–17; and *Letitia Landon: The Woman Behind L.E.L.*, (Manchester; Manchester University Press, 1995).

⁴ See Katherine Montweiler, 'Laughing at Love: L.E.L. and the Embellishment of Eros,' *Romanticism on the Net*, Vol. 29–30, (2003), 43 Paragraphs; Stephen C. Behrendt, *British Women*

creatively responsive to Romantic literary culture, that this chapter shall adhere. One telling statement on Landon's relationship to audience arises in her preface to *The Venetian Bracelet* (1829), where she states '[a]ware that to elevate I must first soften, and that if I wished to purify I must first touch, I have ever endeavoured to bring forward grief, disappointment, the fallen leaf, the faded flower, the broken heart, and the early grave'.⁵ Whilst I shall explore this preface in more detail in my final chapter detailing Landon's use of novels and annuals, for now it is worth noting that it reveals a crucial idea that lies at the heart of Landon's compositional process: 'touch'. The touch she invokes is in relation to her reception. In order to 'soften' her audience, her 'touch' is essential. But 'touch' works both ways, and emerges from multiple places. Not only does Landon attempt to 'touch' her audience, but, as an implication of her enormous popularity, they reach back, and Romantic culture affects her too. This is not, as I shall show, a 'touch' that Landon recoils from, but rather one that she embraces in her compositional process. Her texts, as I shall demonstrate, exist at the centre of a network of interactions. Just as she sculpts her texts as author, her audience also allow Landon to judge how best to negotiate her fame in her texts through their responses and interpretations. These responses are coloured by Romantic literary culture and the conceptions it encourages. It is Landon's interpretation of, as well as play with, such touch that this chapter shall explore. Such a closely considerate relationship with her audience though, has its perils, as Landon knew from following Byron's career. Despite this, Landon, I shall suggest, expertly manages the fine balance between commercial appeal and rebellion without falling into scandal: an area Susan Wolfson labels the 'hot zone' for female writers.⁶

Studies of Landon have blossomed since the 1980s alongside the increasing prominence of feminist critiques of the traditionally male-dominated literary canon.

Poets and the Romantic Writing Community, (Baltimore, MD; John Hopkins University Press, 2009); and Nicholas Mason, *Literary Advertising and the Shaping of British Romanticism*, (Baltimore, MD; John Hopkins University Press, 2013), pp. 81–117.

⁵ I must also mention that, since at the time of writing this thesis there exists no complete modern edition of Landon's works, I will be referencing her poetry and prose from various sources. Due to it being the most recent critical edition of Landon's works, I shall attempt to quote from Letitia Elizabeth Landon, *Letitia Elizabeth Landon: Selected Writings*, ed. Jerome McGann and Daniel Riess, (Ontario; Broadview Press, 1997) as often as possible. However, this edition often prints only selected passages from her longer poetry. If this edition does not contain a complete version of the text I am discussing, I shall then revert to using the online database provided by *Nineteenth-Century Collections Online* as well as the *Hathi Trust Digital Library* (in that order of preference) since they both contain digital scans of the original texts published by Landon. See Landon, 'Preface' to *The Venetian Bracelet*, pp. 102–103.

⁶ For Wolfson utilising her theory of the 'hot zone' as a risky emulation of Byron for female writers like Landon, see Wolfson, *Romantic Interactions: Social Being and the Turns of Literary Action*, (Baltimore, MD; Johns Hopkins University Press, 2010), p. 213, 236, 278, 268.

Whilst I shall explore such important interventions later, I shall briefly identify some of the themes in her works that prominent Landon scholars have recognised, and which are relevant to my exploration of her creative relationship with her audience. Mellor's work has been foundational to the feminist critique of Landon by arguing that Landon's works are sculpted by her adherence to the era's conceptions of femininity, based on the ideas of Edmund Burke's *Philosophical Inquiry Into The Origin Of Our Ideas Of The Sublime And The Beautiful* (1757). Mellor argues that this was in order to ease Landon's difficult financial situation by portraying herself, and her characters, according to such Burkean conceptions.⁷ For instance, lines from *The Golden Violet* (1827) like 'My power is but a woman's power, / Of softness and of sadness made' seemingly exemplify such ideas.⁸ Stephenson, another pioneer in Landon studies, agrees with Mellor, but considers such overly-feminised writing as the 'piling up of the cliché', which serves as 'an unmistakable way of emphasising artifice' in Landon's works.⁹ She further suggests that into this void behind the artifice, Romantic readers were encouraged to pour their own suppositions about Landon based on their gendered ideas about Romantic female poets. This is accordingly what made her so popular.¹⁰ Following Stephenson, Daniel Riess and Jerome McGann have also highlighted the importance of artifice to Landon's works in her construction of a coded proto-feminist critique of the 'feminine' attributes that her poetry parades.¹¹

I wish to build upon such insightful works to argue that Landon deliberately and self-consciously creates a poetry of pretence which appeals to readers by allowing them to construct and believe in Landon as an ideal of their own gendered and societal conceptions, whilst she actually simultaneously uses multiple personae to present shifting attitudes and views which are masked by the artifice. I shall extend Stephenson's work by arguing that it was due to Landon's awareness of audience desire, inspired by the

⁷ Angela Leighton also writes along similar lines, arguing that Landon deliberately portrays her characters as vulnerable in order to encourage the same image onto her own person, though she does emphasise the difficulties Landon faced in the period as having some basis for this portrayal, describing the poet as a 'woman living on the edge of her nerves'. See Angela Leighton, *Victorian Women Poets: Writing Against the Heart*, (London; Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1992), p. 53; and Mellor, *Romanticism and Gender*, pp. 108–109.

⁸ Letitia Elizabeth Landon, *The Golden Violet in The Golden Violet, With its Tales of Romance and Chivalry; and Other Tales*, (London; Longman, Rees, Orme, Brown And Green, 1827), p. 238, in *Nineteenth Century Collections Online* <<http://gdc.galegroup.com/gdc/ncco/>> [accessed 28/04/19].

⁹ Stephenson, *The Woman Behind L.E.L.*, p. 122.

¹⁰ See *Ibid.*, pp. 3–8.

¹¹ See McGann and Riess, 'Introduction' in Landon, *Letitia Elizabeth Landon: Selected Writings*, pp. 11–31.

Byronic model of celebrity, that encouraged her to put an imagined audience (and their interpretations, sculpted by Romantic conceptions of femininity) at the centre of her creative process. Unlike critics who have come before, I intend to focus pointedly on Landon's deployment of personae to play with different perspectives, stances, and ideas. By examining the two-way 'touch' she identifies as taking place between herself and her audience, I hope to shed light on the sculpting effect both audience and the marketplace had in popular authors' compositional processes. In doing so I shall offer a case study of how Landon, as a female poet, navigated this relationship quite differently to the methods open to Scott and Byron explored in previous chapters.

In order to achieve these aims, I shall discuss Landon in three chapters. Chapter Seven shall cover how Landon achieved literary fame through her knowledge of the marketplace and audience desire, the interventions and efforts of her publisher William Jerdan, and her early emulation of tactics pioneered by Scott and Byron in her longer poems. Additionally, following the ideas set out by Mellor, Stephenson, and Angela Leighton, I shall also examine the pressures placed upon her by Romantic literary culture.

Chapter Eight shall examine how Landon, alongside her creation of a poetry of pretence also, in the same poems, created an underlying and often overlooked layer of rebellious play, whereby the Romantic notions of her audience were critiqued and often mocked. The intentional void behind the artifice of Landon's poems allowed her audience to construct their own image of the poet, even whilst she concurrently critiqued such constructions and the societal, gendered basis from which they develop. That chapter, then, shall highlight how Landon constructs a poetry that allows two readings to different audiences, or a poetry of pretence. The first reading allows part of her audience to view her as conflated with her improvisational characters. I shall label this audience her 'commercial audience'. The second reading, though, allows an 'observant' audience to penetrate the artifice to identify Landon as a presence apart, casting a sidelong glance that reveals the artificiality of her poetry as well as potentially radical ideas (such as proto-feminist positions). This use of personae mirrors the tensions between 'romance' and 'reality' that her first novel explicitly discusses. Ultimately, though, 'reality' is not necessarily the correct word. This layer her 'observant' audience interpret is still a construct Landon has deliberately allowed them to read. Much like Byron's audience, they can enjoy a sense that they are 'privileged readers' (to use Mole's term) seeing their form of 'reality' or truth; however, ultimately, their interpretations are already forecast

by Landon.¹² Whether these underlying personae are a true representation of Landon's personality or thoughts during composition is unimportant. What is important is that her understanding of both her 'commercial' and 'observant' audience's interpretations of herself and her poetry are prefigured into the construction of her texts. She has sculpted them, according to her knowledge of the marketplace and various imagined audiences' desires, as we shall see, through her collaboration with William Jerdan (her publisher) and her observation of the fame of Scott and Byron, making her texts as polyvocal as her precursors' texts.

Finally, the last chapter entitled 'Landon's Novels And Annuals', shall analyse Landon's mobile personae in the literary annuals, the freedom they offered her, as well as the change in tactics Landon executes between her poetry and novels late in her career. What will become clear from the chapters is the mobility which characterises Landon's authorial identity. Landon does not develop this solely as a reaction against the patriarchal pressures of the print market, however. Instead, her mobile personae are a response to the creative relationship that she formed with a readership, and a market, that was itself multifaceted.

The Construction Of 'L.E.L.'

'We love the bird we taught to sing.'¹³ So said William Jerdan, reminiscing about his early encounters with the poetess who would be launched by his journal, *The Literary Gazette*, and help it sell around 4,000 copies a week in 1823.¹⁴ The comment is apt as Jerdan's guiding hand can be seen throughout Landon's career, in the direction he encouraged her to follow and in her initial popularity itself. According to her biographer Laman Blanchard, Landon, supposedly like Byron, woke up one morning to find herself famous.¹⁵ Whilst most criticism has skimmed over the supposition, focussing instead on the intrigue generated by Landon's initials accompanying her work, Nicholas Mason makes the important corrective that Landon's successful career was actually indebted to

¹² See Mole, pp. 58–59.

¹³ William Jerdan, *The Autobiography of William Jerdan: With His Literary, Political and Social Reminiscences and Correspondence During the Last Fifty Years*, 4 Vols., (London; A. Hall, Virtue & Co., 1852), vol. 3, p. 168.

¹⁴ These figures are quoted in Daniel Riess, 'Laetitia Landon and the Dawn of English Post-Romanticism', *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900*, Vol. 36, Issue 4, (1996), pp. 807–827.

¹⁵ Julie Watt, *Poisoned Lives: The Regency Poet Letitia Elizabeth Landon (L.E.L.) and British Gold Coast Administrator George Maclean*, (Brighton; Sussex Academic Press, 2010), p. 32.

the directions of her publisher Jerdan, who utilised the modern sales tactic of ‘band-wagon marketing’, in which ‘Jerdan’s real masterstroke was manipulating the reading public into believing that Landon was wildly popular years before she actually was’.¹⁶

In order to understand the magnitude of the impact Jerdan had upon Landon’s career, it is crucial to understand his resources and background. At his height, William Bates saw Jerdan as ‘a power in the Republic of Letters. Reputations were thought to depend upon his nod; he could make, or unmake, the fortune of a book; and the young Argonaut, adventuring forth on the ocean of fame, looked anxiously for “a puff from the river Jordan”.... to waft his bark into the haven of success’.¹⁷ Debuting on the 25th of January 1817, Henry Colburn’s *Literary Gazette* was taken over by Jerdan six months later.¹⁸ As Daniel Riess highlights, its audience consisted of the emergent middle class ‘when the average price of a triple-decker novel was over thirty shillings, and monthly and quarterly magazines cost half a crown, the *Gazette*, at eight pence per issue, provided an affordable alternative for the less affluent reader.’¹⁹ One of the crucial attractions of the *Gazette*, according to Jerdan, was its avoidance of politics as well as its ‘Original Poetry’ section, which Landon debuted in under the pseudonym ‘L.’ with her poem ‘Rome’ on the 8th of March, 1820.²⁰ It produced poetry and prose in parts, with, for instance, Landon’s ‘Medallion Wafers’ series being released across three months, which is a tactic that, according to N. N. Feltes, enabled ‘the bourgeois audience’s ideological engagement to be sensed and expanded, [and] allow[ed] as well the extraction of ever greater surplus value from the very production (or “creative”) process itself’.²¹ Jerdan’s *Gazette*, then, equipped Landon and himself with a vehicle that enabled them to accurately judge and react to audience response and increase audience anticipation of

¹⁶ Mason, *Literary Advertising*, p. 85.

¹⁷ Mason, here, quotes the section on Jerdan in *The Maclise Portrait Gallery of Illustrious Literary Characters*, ed. William Bates, 2nd Edition, (London, Chatto And Windus, 1898), p. 3; and see Mason, *Literary Advertising*, p. 83.

¹⁸ Veronica Melnyk, “‘Half Fashion and Half Passion’: The Life of Publisher Henry Colburn”, (Unpublished Doctoral Thesis, University of Birmingham, 2002), p. 50.

¹⁹ Riess, ‘Dawn Of English Post-Romanticism’, p. 809.

²⁰ In his stewardship of *The Gazette*, Jerdan had the foresight to include the ‘Original Poetry’ section, differing his magazine from others in the period. He justified this in that ‘[a]t this epoch the higher compositions of poetry were very popular. It was a direct contrast to the condition of the Muse at the present time’ and that ‘[i]nstead of being a weight to drag down a periodical, and be passed over unread, the poetry in the “Gazette” was one of its most attractive features, and the young, the imaginative, and the cultivated, rallied round the standard “flowing sheet.” The sensation afterwards made by L. E. L. completed the charm.’ Without such a move, Landon may never have had the platform to flourish. See, Jerdan, vol. 3, pp. 215, 216.

²¹ N. N. Feltes, *Modes of Production of Victorian Novels*, (Chicago, IL; University of Chicago Press, 1986), p. 9.

the next release. The famous signature 'L.E.L.' would first feature in 1821, continuing with the 'Poetical Sketches' from January 1822 and was met by glowing reviews, likely by Jerdan, each time in the *Gazette*.²²

As Mason notes, though, between September 1821 and July 1824, reviews of Landon's works did not appear in any other literary journal.²³ This did not stop Jerdan in his review of *The Improvisatrice* (1824) declaring that '[t]he compositions of L.E.L., as they have appeared in the *Literary Gazette*, have been most universally copied to adorn [other journals'] pages' and that 'the public opinion has coincided with ours upon the genius of the author and the merits of this volume; for on the first day of its appearance nearly the whole of a large impression was rapidly disposed of, and obligations, we have not the slightest doubt, will follow in quick succession'.²⁴ Mason shows that both statements were untrue. From its release, *The Improvisatrice* took two and a half months to need a second edition printed. Compared to Byron's *Corsair*, selling seven editions in one month, Landon's sales could be described as initially sluggish.²⁵ As Mason aptly argues, by referring to Landon as already a 'widely printed genius' and making claims that were unlikely to be verified in the eyes of his audience (the 'bandwagon effect' as he labels it), Jerdan 'seems to have grasped in this early moment in Landon's career was that the mirage of literary celebrity could be every bit as effective at selling books and magazines as real celebrity'.²⁶ This, coupled with the regular release of Landon's poems in every edition of the frequent *Gazette*, gave Jerdan's audience the impression that everyone was indeed consuming the in-demand Landon's works. What was illusion, created reality: Landon's popularity was based on Jerdan's clever marketing strategy and unashamed 'puffing'.

Nevertheless, Landon's association with Jerdan was not entirely reputation enhancing. It also provided tensions that would plague her career: both the accusations of puffing levelled at Jerdan which would be used to disparage her works, and also dogged rumours of her relationship with him. As Cynthia Lawford has revealed, Landon's relationship with the married Jerdan extended beyond professionalism, secretly resulting in

²² See Watt, p. 30.

²³ Mason, *Literary Advertising*, p. 92.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 97.

²⁵ These sales figures did accelerate sharply though, eventually going through six editions in its first year. Indeed, *The Corsair* is a very high watermark for sales since Byron was the bestselling poet of the day. However, her sales, whilst not matching Byron, outperformed other poets, including most male poets, like Samuel Rogers or Keats. For these print figures, see St Clair, *Reading Nation*, pp. 615–616.

²⁶ Mason, *Literary Advertising*, p. 95.

three children.²⁷ Inevitably, rumours circulated. In October 1826, for instance, *The Wasp* printed a piece highlighting ‘that altho’ [Landon] was as thin and aerial as one of her own sylphs, she in the course of a few months acquired so perceptible a degree of embonpoint, as to induce her kind friend Jerdan to recommend a change of air, lest her health and strength should be affected. She followed his advice, and strange to say, such was the effect of even two months absence from Brompton, that she returned as thin and poetical as ever.’²⁸ The following edition contained a poem entitled ‘The Swellings Of Jerdan’ by one ‘Letitia Languish’.²⁹ The rumours’ veracity mattered little to *The Wasp* or seemingly, later, to Jerdan. Due to Landon’s success, generated by Jerdan’s close collaboration, sales of both *The Wasp* and the *Gazette* were boosted by the attacks, with Jerdan commenting later that ‘[t]his, at least, I can truly affirm that the "Gazette" and its Editor, so serviceably reviled, reaped every beneficial consequence which was naturally to be expected—the former advancing rapidly in circulation, and the latter being (it might be unduly) more highly appreciated in social and literary life.’³⁰

Furthermore, Jerdan, in his handling of Landon, had also developed a reputation as a ‘portable puffing machine’, as *The Wasp* labelled him.³¹ The *Gazette*’s ebullition that Landon was the ‘English Sappho’ invited the ire of rival magazines and, according to Mary Waters, can be seen as him ‘perhaps throwing down a gauntlet’.³² *Blackwood’s Edinburgh Magazine* took issue, describing Landon as ‘one of the sweetest little girls in the world, and her book is one of the sweetest little books in the world; but Jerdan’s extravagant trumpeting has quite sickened every body... Sappho! and Corinna, forsooth! Proper humbug.’³³ Attacks by publications regarding Jerdan’s reputation as an ‘unabashed puffer’, as well as rumours of her private life with him, led Landon to state to her cousin in 1826:

²⁷ Cynthia Lawford, ‘Diary’, in *London Review of Books*, Vol. 22, Number 18, (September 2000), pp. 36–37.

²⁸ *The Wasp*, (7 October 1826), quoted in Watt, p. 56.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 56–57.

³⁰ Jerdan, vol. 3, p. 221.

³¹ Quoted in *Ibid.*, p. 214.

³² Jerdan initially called Landon ‘the fair Sappho’ earlier in a review of ‘The Fate Of Adelaide’ but went on to use the term ‘the English Sappho’ frequently in *The Literary Gazette*. See ‘Review of “The Fate of Adelaide”’ in *The London Literary Gazette*, Vol. 237, (August 4th, 1821), p. 492; and Mary A. Waters, ‘Letitia Landon’s Literary Criticism and Her Romantic Project: L.E.L.’s Poetics of Feeling and the Periodical Reviews’ in *Women’s Writing*, Vol. 18, Issue.3, (2011), pp. 305–330 (p. 312).

³³ Quoted in Harriet K. Linkin, ‘Romantic Aesthetics in Mary Tighe and Letitia Landon: How Women Poets Recuperate the Gaze’ in *European Romantic Review*, Vol. 7, Issue 2, (June 2008), pp. 159–188 (p. 172).

I think of the treatment I have received until my very soul writhes under the powerlessness of its anger. It is only because I am poor, unprotected, and dependent on popularity, that I am a mark for all the gratuitous insolence and malice of idleness and ill-nature. And I cannot but feel that had I been possessed of rank and opulence, either these remarks had never been made, or if they had, how trivial would their consequence have been to me. I must begin with the only subject—the only thing in the world I really feel an interest in—my writings. It is not a vanity when I say, their success is their fault.³⁴

Landon's success, or at least the ways in which Jerdan constructed it, seems indeed to be the fault of her writings. Her works, then, were constructed in a way which incorporated, relied upon, and functioned as an addition to Jerdan's aggressive marketing strategy. Bandwagon marketing and the vulnerable femininity portrayed in her works can thus be seen as part of a larger marketing strategy to which Jerdan contributed, acting as a creative influence upon her works and public image, eventually bringing Landon both fame and controversy due to her close connections to him.

However, Landon's above statement too easily neglects the very active role Landon took in her initial desire and rise to fame. As Mason states, '[t]he creation of L.E.L.-mania, however, was by no means a one-person production; Landon proved every bit as commercially savvy as Jerdan over time' writing 'poetry by the pound' to directly appeal to her understanding of Romantic audiences.³⁵ Traditional Landon criticism supports the viewpoint that Landon was buffeted by market forces and a literary culture beyond her control, although it is also equally inaccurate to portray her as a 'money-grabbing cynic dedicated only to exploiting the too tender sensibilities of gullible readers' as Virginia Blain has.³⁶ Both arguments promote a one-dimensional viewpoint. However, it is fair to state that 'from the very first moment she appeared in print,

³⁴ Landon, 'L.E.L. to Katherine Thomson, June 1826' cited in Blanchard, vol. 1, p. 54.

³⁵ See Mason, *Literary Advertising*, pp. 83–84.

³⁶ Mellor states, for instance, that, '[o]nce Landon accepted her culture's hegemonic definition of the female, she could only repeat the same story over and over' and that '[h]aving taken her culture's limited construction of gender as ontological "truth", Landon could only map a terrain whose roads all converged on the same centre, the same dead end'. See Mellor, *Romanticism and Gender*, p. 114; Stephenson, 'The Victorian Improvisatrice', pp. 1–2; and Virginia Blain, 'Letitia Elizabeth Landon, Eliza Mary Hamilton, and the Genealogy of the Victorian Poetess' in *Victorian Poetry*, Vol. 33, Issue 1, (Spring 1995), pp. 31–51 (p. 43).

Landon openly courted fame and exploited the possibilities opened up by the expansion of the literary marketplace in the early nineteenth century'.³⁷

Indeed Landon seemed to enjoy the privileges of fame, as Claire Knowles points out.³⁸ Perhaps the most explicit example of Landon's clever marketing is in her use of anonymity and initials to build audience fascination with herself. Andrew Bennett states that 'anonymizing and pseudonymizing gestures may in fact be seen as concentrating attention on the authors, on authorialism, precisely by provoking an interest in the true originator of the text'.³⁹ This echoes Blanchard's observations of Landon's use of 'L.E.L.' as a pseudonym in the *Gazette* when she states that those three letters 'became a signature of magical interest and curiosity'.⁴⁰ Edward Bulwer Lytton, on his first encounter with Landon's initials, recounted that:

At that time poetry was not yet out of fashion, at least with us of the cloister; and there was always in the reading-room of the Union a rush every Saturday afternoon for the 'Literary Gazette'; and an impatient anxiety to hasten at once to that corner of the sheet which contained the three magical letters, 'L.E.L.'. And all of us praised the verse, and all of us guessed at the author. We soon learned it was a female, and our admiration was doubled, and our conjectures tripled. Was she young? Was she pretty? And—for there were some embryo fortune-hunters among us—was she rich?⁴¹

Richard Cronin describes the effect of initials as a 'a device that from the first invited the reader to decode the poem and reveal the poet, to pry beneath the text, which is conceived as a somewhat diaphanous material scarcely obscuring the warm and palpitating body of the woman who wrote it. All the six volumes of Landon's poetry can be read as a large expansion of the invitation compressed into the "three magical letters of "L.E.L."'.⁴² Much of Landon's early fame can thus be attributed to the aura of mystery surrounding those three 'magical' letters.⁴³

³⁷ Claire Knowles, 'Poetry, Fame and Scandal: The Cases of Byron and Landon' in *Literary Compass*, Vol. 4, Issue 4, (July 2007), pp. 1109–1121 (p. 1111).

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Bennett, *The Author*, (London; Routledge, 2004), p. 54.

⁴⁰ Blanchard, vol. 1, p. 30.

⁴¹ Ibid., p. 32.

⁴² Richard Cronin, *Romantic Victorians: English Literature, 1824-1840*, (Basingstoke; Palgrave, 2002), p. 83.

⁴³ Montweiler additionally contends that the use of 'L.E.L.' is attractive to her readers phonetically and thus acted as a useful marketing tool. See Montweiler, p. 29.

Of course there was nothing revolutionary about the use of pseudonyms, as the previous chapter on Scott has suggested. At the time of Landon's rise to prominence, the literary world was still awash with speculation as to who the 'Great Unknown' might be. Indeed, as Mason's study once again shows (debunking the foundational views of Landon studies), the use of pseudonyms in the form of initials hoping to ape the success of Scott was commonplace at the time with 'Z' (J. G. Lockhart) of *Blackwood's Magazine* and 'XYZ' (Thomas De Quincey) of *The London Magazine* being notable examples.⁴⁴ However, what was revolutionary about Landon's use of 'L.E.L.' was the fact that the initials explicitly denoted a woman. Landon's gender was a facet Jerdan played upon in his promotion by describing her regularly as 'a lady still yet in her teens' (despite the fact that Landon was in her early twenties when the statement was published) and a 'young and female minstrel'.⁴⁵ As both Lytton's and Cronin's statements suggest, the real fascination with Landon was the potential woman who hid beneath the surface of 'L.E.L.'. Lytton's questions—'was she young', 'pretty', or 'rich'—clearly indicate that he and his friends were constructing an image of Landon in their own heads from their own desires, and reading her texts in the hope of supporting their constructions.⁴⁶ By using a pseudonym rather than publishing under her own name, and by allowing her gender to be a crucial advertising aspect, Landon was guiding her readers to become fascinated with her own person and inviting them to speculate upon her, much like Byron had done with his own suggestive poems. The very mystery of her female identity, then, allows a romantic image of the poet to build in the heads of her readers (however divorced from reality), and sees the framework of a poetry of pretence put in place.

The obscurity offered by Landon's use of 'L.E.L.' was coupled with another intentional move by the poetess to achieve literary fame: the direct referencing and allusion to the most popular poet of the day, Byron. Frederic Rowton's 1848 anthology *The Female Poets Of Great Britain* declared on Landon's death that 'We have not forgotten

⁴⁴ As Mason points out, such a practice builds on eighteenth-century periodicals which used pseudonyms like this. However, in the accelerated market of the nineteenth century, 'XYZ' and 'Z' could indeed hope to become celebrities in their own right. See Mason, *Literary Advertising*, pp. 90–91.

⁴⁵ Quoted in Watt, p. 30.

⁴⁶ Linda H. Peterson also discusses Landon's clever use of periodical spaces, such as the 'Original Poetry' section in which Lytton indicates he read Landon, located in the 'inner right-hand page' of *The Gazette*. For more on this, see Linda H. Peterson, 'Nineteenth-Century Women Poets and Periodical Spaces: Letitia Landon and Felicia Hemans' in *Victorian Periodicals Review*, Vol. 49, Number 3, (Autumn 2016), pp. 396–414.

the electric shock which the death of Byron, falling in his prime and in a noble cause, sent through Europe: nor the more expected, but not less solemn and strongly recognised departure of Sir Walter Scott: but neither of these exceeded that with which the news was received of the sudden decease of this still young and popular poetess.⁴⁷ He continued that ‘both [Byron and Landon] acquired world-wide fame in youth; both were shamefully maligned and misrepresented; both became gloomy and misanthropical under falsehoods asserted of them; both died young, and abroad.’⁴⁸ Whilst Rowton’s anthology looks back at Landon’s life and is skewed by her mythologised death, it highlights one important point: that Landon’s poetry and life had become indelibly connected with Byron’s.

Throughout Landon’s works there are a number of intentionally Byronic characters, tropes, themes, and references to the poet’s works. Similarly named characters such as ‘Leila’ from *The Improvisatrice*’s poetic tale ‘A Moorish Romance’ (an ‘Eastern Tale’ which emulates Byron’s *The Corsair*) and ‘Manfredi’ from the poem ‘Rosalie’ in the same volume as *The Improvisatrice* (mirroring Byron’s *Manfred*) make appearances.⁴⁹ Furthermore, *The Improvisatrice* as a whole mirrors Byron’s *Childe Harold*, Canto IV with its Italian settings and increasingly brooding protagonist pining over a lost love (with interspersed ‘Eastern Tales’ such as ‘The Hindoo Girl’s Song’). Published in 1824, the year of Byron’s death, *The Improvisatrice* actively sought to emulate her precursor and augment her own success by using well known Byronic features.⁵⁰ Indeed, Lorenzo’s character, the object of the *Improvisatrice*’s desires, is described as possessing a ‘dark and flashing eye’, a ‘high and haughty brow’, and possessing a ‘smile which passed like lightning o’er / The curved lip’, almost a facsimile of the famous, idealised portraits of Byron as well as his elemental male characters.⁵¹ The effect

⁴⁷ Quoted in Adriana Craciun, *Fatal Women of Romanticism*, (Cambridge; Cambridge University Press, 2003), p. 282.

⁴⁸ Quoted in *Ibid.*, p. 204.

⁴⁹ See Letitia Elizabeth Landon, *The Improvisatrice* and ‘Rosalie’ in *The Improvisatrice: and Other Poems*, (London; Hurst, Robinson And Co., and A. Constable and Co., 1824), pp. 15–18, 114 in *Nineteenth Century Collections Online* <<http://gdc.galegroup.com/gdc/ncco/>> [accessed 28/04/19].

⁵⁰ Indeed, Jerdan played upon the recent death of Byron by directly linking the poet’s death to his destined literary immortality, promising the same for Landon in his review of *The Improvisatrice* in *The Literary Gazette* with the statement: ‘if the author never excels what she has already done, we can confidently give her the assurance of what the possessor of such talents must most earnestly covet—*Immortality*.’ Quoted in Watt, p. 32.

⁵¹ These lines are almost a facsimile of the description of Byron’s *Corsair*, for example, (‘Sunburnt his cheek, his forehead high and pale / The sable curls in wide profusion veil’) including the use of elemental adjectives like ‘lightning’ or, as in *The Corsair*, ‘Though his dark eyebrow

is that Landon's works actively adopt the mantle left vacant by Byron's death, opportunistically figuring her career as an extension of Byron's own. The 'female Byron' tag was thus Landon's audience reading her poetry in the precise way Landon intended them to. Replication of the Byronic relationship was thus figured into Landon's creativity. This tactic leads Jerome McGann to term Landon a 'second order Byron' in that she inherits Byron's awareness of audience and his place in relation to them, and further develops it.⁵² Because Byron was the most popular poet of the day, by means of constant referencing and allusion, Landon could position herself as immediately recognisable to her audience and as the heir to the relationship he held with that audience.

Landon's emulation of Byron goes beyond just poetic tags and themes, though. Andrew Elfenbein notes that the market for literature in the early Romantic period established the parameters under which literary celebrity would flourish for the next century, one whereby readers expected an intimacy with the poet through their works.⁵³ As Tom Mole has contended, this was the basis for Byron's 'hermeneutic of intimacy'.⁵⁴ In her use of the Byronic model with *The Improvisatrice*, Landon had actively adopted such a model of reception with her own works: 'L.E.L.' and the Improvisatrice's emotions were seen to be one and the same. However, there is a crucial difference in the functioning of Landon's intimacy with her audience to Byron's, one that was creatively (albeit, guided by Landon) misread by her audience. Whereas Mole contends that Byron's poems functioned via his audience's speculation from rumour that his poems were biographical (leading them, through their knowledge of such rumour, to feel intimate with the poet), Landon's do not. Landon adopts the Byronic audience's desire for intimacy with her as poet (and desire for her, as Bulwer-Lytton's quotes indicate), but their assumptions of intimacy are based upon their previous readings of Byron and their own gendered viewpoints of women and poetry, not leaked information about any of her private adventures.⁵⁵ The Improvisatrice is not Landon in the way that Childe Harold may

shades a glance of fire'. See Byron, *The Corsair*, ll. 203–204, 196; and Landon, *The Improvisatrice*, pp. 29, 63.

⁵² McGann, *The Poetics of Sensibility: A Revolution in Literary Style*, (Oxford; Clarendon Press, 1996), p. 146.

⁵³ See Andrew Elfenbein, *Byron and the Victorians*, (Cambridge; Cambridge University Press, 1995), p. 52–53.

⁵⁴ See Mole, pp. 22–23.

⁵⁵ *The Wasp* article quoted earlier, for instance, whilst leaking information of Landon's private life, was neither authorised nor supported by Landon and her publisher in attempt to form her public image, nor contained information that mystifies her character or benefits it positively,

well be Byron. As McGann's label of a 'second order Byron' indicate, Landon has adopted a Byronic model of relationship with audience, but developed it 'to a higher level of abstraction' by deploying it based on different terms.⁵⁶ In this sense, Landon has coupled her understandings of audience desire through Byron to her unique position as an anonymous female writer, manipulating both factors into her poetic composition and her initial wish for popularity. As we shall see later, Landon's increasing fame would encourage her to challenge this Byronic method of reading based on her own female experience.

Getting Intimate With Landon

In his 1853 anthology, *Female Poets Of Great Britain*, coeditor George Bethune argued that women 'write from impulse, and rapidly as they think' and that 'As the line came first into the brain, so it was written: as it was written, so it was printed. Mrs. Hemans's melody was as much improvisation as Miss Landon's'.⁵⁷ Whilst this is a patronising and reductive view, it does highlight a tactic that Landon utilised that both adhered to the gender assumptions of her period and helped construct the artificial intimacy her audience felt with 'L.E.L.': the portrayal of improvisation.⁵⁸ Women's education in the period was commonly confined to domestic disciplines, and therefore what they wrote about was expected to avoid philosophical concerns and be taken from experience.⁵⁹ As

such as the marketing techniques Byron and Murray deployed in their construction of his identity. If anything, it damaged her career and played a far smaller part in her public perception and as to why people ultimately read her works.

⁵⁶ McGann, *The Poetics Of Sensibility*, p. 146.

⁵⁷ George Bethune, *The British Female Poets*, (Philadelphia; Lindsay & Blakiston, 1848), p. viii.

⁵⁸ As Masae Kamatsu highlights the Countess of Blessington's poem, 'Stock In Trade Of Modern Poetesses' (1833) offers a mocking yet somewhat accurate depiction of the ways 'poetesses' portray themselves to the public, and as to how they write. Especially in the lines 'Wither'd hopes, and faded flowers, / Beauties pining in their bowers; / Broken harps and untuned lyres; / Lutes neglected, unquench'd fires' are 'all the stock in trade / With which a modern poem's made'. Accordingly, it can be seen to accurately highlight some of Landon's own tactics. See Masae Kamatsu, 'Love as Commodity: Letitia Elizabeth Landon and "Sappho"' in *Essays in English Romanticism*, Vol. 39, (2015), pp. 133–149 (p. 144).

⁵⁹ Exemplifying this, Stephenson highlights that *The European Magazine* yielded that 'the distinction in point of *natural* abilities between the two sexes are very small... were the minds of women as carefully cultivated as those of the opposite sex, there would be none at all. We would not gift her with that power of reasoning, that grasp and depth of thought, that characterises the man, but where fancy and imagination, and the disposal of the gifts of genius are concerned, women would, were their minds liberated from those shackles of their education enforces, be equal, and often times superior to men.' See 'Review Of The Improvisatrice' in *The*

Stephen Behrendt remarks, 'The assumption was that women should write about "what they knew", which implied that their writing must inevitably be essentially autobiographical (and "historical," in Aristotelian terms) in nature, while men's writing was "naturally" imaginative (and "poetic," in Aristotelian terms).' ⁶⁰

As her character in *The Improvisatrice* is an improvisatrice, the connections her audience made between 'L.E.L.' and the words of the Improvisatrice were immediately conflated due to their own suppositions regarding women and poetry. But, further to this, Landon's use of apparent 'improvisation' in, for instance, the lines 'My next was of a minstrel too, / Who proved what women's hand might do, / When true to the heart pulse, it woke / The harp', perform three actions of encouraged conflation.⁶¹ Firstly, it asserts that a woman's heart must be seen through her music, cementing her audience's views that 'L.E.L.'s heart can be seen through the poem, thus constructing a false sense of intimacy for her audience. Secondly, it acts as Landon creating artwork about a woman who creates artwork. By portraying the Improvisatrice as both art and artist, Landon is encouraging her audience to view 'L.E.L.' in the same light: to apply their responses to her poem to 'L.E.L.' as well. Finally, as the poem was written by a woman, and thus (according to their own suppositions) already effectively improvisational (coming directly 'from the heart'), Landon is encouraging her audience that they are witness to an extempore piece of art and thus, again, intimate with the author.⁶² Her audience thus not only feels intimate or in close proximity to their constructed ideal of 'L.E.L.' but also feels that, as women 'must' speak extempore from experience, they are witness to her own authentic feelings in her poetry.

However, as with Byron, the intimacy and improvisation is false. It is a construct in the minds of Landon's audience built upon their own gendered viewpoints, albeit one encouraged by the poet herself by writing of improvisational characters. Landon has thus constructed poetry that allows her audience to believe they are intimately

European Magazine, (1824), pp. 159–160, quoted in Stephenson, *The Woman Behind L.E.L.*, p. 9.

⁶⁰ Behrendt, p. 19.

⁶¹ Cronin also argues that Landon's verse structure in *The Improvisatrice*, couplets interrupted irregularly by quatrains, in which the first and third lines are unrhymed, also gives the poem the illusion of uncontrolled improvisation and places the reader as imaginatively witness to such a performance. For this discussion, see Cronin, *Romantic Victorians*, p. 92.

⁶² As I have mentioned in relation to Byron's *Beppo*, Esterhammer posits that such faux-improvised poetry breeds a sense of intimacy with the poet's audience, as they feel themselves privileged observers to an extempore event. For this discussion, see Esterhammer, 'Spontaneity, Immediacy, And Improvisation', pp. 321–335.

witnessing improvisation by the female poet, when in actuality they are merely imagining such intimacy to 'L.E.L.' as well as constructing an image of 'L.E.L.' as an idealised woman by their gendered standards. Just as Bulwer-Lytton's speculations demonstrate, 'L.E.L.' as letters, operate as a moniker for her readers' idealised woman, one which, due to Landon's adopted Byronic model of intimacy, is apparently 'close' to them.⁶³ If we examine a quotation from *Romance and Reality* on Landon's character Emily, we can see the mechanism of Landon's 'improvisational poetry':

She had seen many who had long been the throned idols of her imagination, and her disappointment much resembled that of the princely lover of Cinderella, who, on questioning his porters if they had seen a robed and radiant beauty pass, learnt that their uncharmed eyes had only beheld a little dirty girl. She had fallen into the common error of supposing that the author must personify his works, and that his conversation must be copy and compeer of his writings.⁶⁴

Her commercial reader's romance, much like Emily's, had encouraged them to believe in the spell that made Landon the Improvisatrice of her poems. The reality, though, was that her audience had 'fallen' (although 'pushed' by Landon is a more apt term) into the trap of supposing that Landon must 'personify' her works. Readers' desire for intimacy with an author, even imagined, coupled with their desires and conceptions regarding women, has thus shaped the ways in which Landon's poems are constructed. Therefore, Landon has privileged audience constructions of herself, originating from her readers' cultural attitudes, in order to mould her relationship with her audience and sell her poems through an artificial Byronic intimacy. As we shall see in the next chapter, this 'L.E.L.' of her audience's romance, is a very different Landon to the mobile personae that operate largely under her Romantic audience's radar in her longer poems. 'Commercial readers', like the reviewer of *The Athenaeum* at the start of this chapter, are thus left shocked when their constructed 'L.E.L.' is replaced with the critical persona of *Romance and Reality*, one that was there all along and visible only to the observant and receptive reader.

Different Audiences, Different Appeals

⁶³ Quoted in Blanchard, vol. 1, p. 32.

⁶⁴ Letitia Elizabeth Landon, *Romance And Reality*, 3 Vols., (London; Henry Colburn and Richard Bentley, 1831), vol. 1, pp. 155–156, in *Nineteenth Century Collections Online* <<http://gdc.galegroup.com/gdc/ncco/>> [accessed 28/04/19].

Whilst reviewing *The Troubadour* (1825), *The New Monthly Magazine* stated that ‘All critics seem to have agreed to treat this lady with the gallantry due to her sex, and we shall not break the custom. But in truth she does not need such protection—for this poem of *The Troubadour* is really so beautiful and graceful, as to demand our applause as a right, not as a compliment.’⁶⁵ The comment betrays the male reviewer’s attitudes towards Landon as a poet, an attitude that was central to her appeal to men: ‘gallantry’. Indeed, Landon’s poems are characterised by her constant self-awareness of her position in relation to her audience. But this audience was not uniform, least of all by their gender. Both men and women read Landon. ‘L.E.L.’, as discussed, was in the somewhat unusual position of being a hugely popular anonymous female poet, which allowed her male audience to construct her according to their own ideas and desires. Accordingly, due to her assumptions of her readership and their tastes, Landon figured the very different desires of both her male and female readers into her poems by according them different positions in relation to her characters. By coupling the adopted Byronic model of celebrity with Burkean constructions of her poetic female characters (which Mellor identifies), those ideas and desires of her male audience are placed through her characters onto ‘L.E.L.’ herself. As we shall see though, she also invited women to view themselves as similar to her characters, allowing them a realm through literature in which they could safely explore their own desires which Romantic era culture often attempted to stifle due to its rigid gender assumptions.⁶⁶

Cronin writes that Landon consciously ‘constructs herself as the icon of feminine vulnerability’ throughout her career.⁶⁷ This construction of vulnerability is what makes Landon appeal to her male readers’ ideas of their own position in relation to Landon. Take lines such as these describing the Improvisatrice’s loneliness and heartbreak: ‘I ever thought that poet’s fate, / Utterly alone and desolate. / It is the spirit’s bitterest pain / To love, and be beloved again’.⁶⁸ The male reader is invited to imagine themselves as one who may be able to save the Improvisatrice, and through her, ‘L.E.L.’. Such tactics repeat themselves in the similar plots of most of Landon’s longer poems

⁶⁵ *The New Monthly Magazine*, (1825) p. 364, quoted in Stephenson, *The Woman Behind L.E.L.*, p. 31.

⁶⁶ For more on the rigid gender conceptions of the period, see Mary Poovey, *The Proper Lady and the Woman Writer*, (Chicago, IL; University Of Chicago Press, 1985), pp. 3–47.

⁶⁷ Cronin, *Romantic Victorians*, p. 94.

⁶⁸ Landon, *The Improvisatrice*, p. 6.

throughout the 1820s, but it is rarely the woman's own fault that she is undone. Landon's women are at the mercy of capricious men and their whims, seeking their affections to discover that 'Love's bright fount is never pure; / And all his pilgrims must endure / All passion's mighty suffering / Ere they may reach the blessed spring. / And some who waste their lives to find / A prize which they may never win'.⁶⁹ As Cronin argues, '[t]he weeping woman, the woman abandoned and fast dwindling into death, exerts over the reader a powerful sentimental appeal that the poems themselves make to their reader, who is himself the chivalrous man who, by reading Landon's poems, rescues her from her desolate loneliness. It is very knowingly done.'⁷⁰ Just as the critic of *The New Monthly Magazine* sought to treat Landon with gallantry, her male readers are invited to imagine themselves as the gallant man to rescue 'L.E.L.' from her misery.

However, as I have highlighted, not only men read Landon. She also had a wide female audience, as Katherine Montweiler has shown.⁷¹ In order to entertain both audiences, Landon simultaneously appealed to differing desires sought out respectively by them. She imagined a commercial male reader and constructed his desires into her poems, whilst concurrently doing the same for her commercial female readers. For that commercial female audience, the appeal she constructed for them revolved around the safe exploration of erotics, something women did not have as easy access to as their male counterparts. The rules of literary societies, a central site by means of which middle-class readers often accessed literature, frequently highlighted the importance of men morally policing female reading in their rules, for instance.⁷² Stephenson highlights that due to Romantic gender conceptions, '[c]onventionally, a woman should not speak of her love before the man declares his. Consequently, a woman whose love is unrequited or unknown cannot vocalise desire'. She goes on: 'Prior to the man's confession of love, only the woman's body—which like her words cannot but speak the heart—may express their own love.'⁷³ The Burkean conceptions of the feminine that Mellor identifies thus restricted women from broaching the topic of love to their desired, if they were not approached first.⁷⁴ Landon's heroines thus always pine after a male character, but,

⁶⁹ Ibid., p. 7.

⁷⁰ Cronin, *Romantic Victorians*, p. 86.

⁷¹ See Montweiler, p. 4.

⁷² Jon Mee suggests that the setting up of rules that excluded women from membership of reading societies in the late eighteenth century, or of joining debate in those societies, may be down to the desire to keep 'talk about the wrong kind of subjects from the wrong sort of people'. See Mee, pp. 11–12.

⁷³ Stephenson, *The Woman Behind L.E.L.*, p. 95.

⁷⁴ See Mellor, *Romanticism and Gender*, pp. 108–110.

differently to Byron's works (sanctioned by his status as a male aristocrat), their love is neither consummated nor admitted to their desired. Stephenson highlights that the lines from *The Troubadour* 'Yes, it is written on thy brow, / The all thy lip may not avow, / All that in a woman's heart can dwell, / Save by a blush unutterable' portray Landon's character's love through the unintended effects on their bodies.⁷⁵ The love Landon's character feels is evident via the physical signs apparent 'on [her] brow' displaying the tumultuous emotion lying below the surface. Due to convention, though, Landon's character's 'lip may not avow, / All that [is in her] heart' and thus, if not for her brow and 'blush', her love could not be 'uttered' to her lover or, more importantly, read by her audience. Women, in order to communicate their desire, evidently must perform it, as Landon's characters do. As Stephenson highlights, one crucial period that allows Landon to justify such physical performance of emotion alongside verbal, is the moment of abandonment.⁷⁶ At this point, relentlessly employed throughout many of Landon's works, her characters may speak of their love (as the man has sanctioned it by professing love first), but also perform it, not through confirmed consummation (far too bold and explicit an action for a female writer), but through the tortured emotion evident in their physical appearance and acts. As Stephenson makes clear, then, Landon's use of abandonment and visible emotion on her characters' bodies and through their actions, thus safely allows her to communicate female desires which her female audience could, otherwise, not enjoy for themselves. Landon's use of abandoned female characters is thus the product of her envisioning the different desires of her commercial male and female readers and figuring them into her poem by orientating her readers in different positions to those characters, whether as male saviour, or female empathiser and explorer of otherwise forbidden eroticism. Both frameworks written by Landon develop from her awareness of audience configuration and their desires (demonstrated to her by Byron as well as Jerdan's marketing techniques), combining Burkean conceptions of the woman with Byronic celebrity. By allowing her readers to imagine themselves in their respective gendered roles, with 'L.E.L.' fulfilling their desires, Landon is constructing a poetry whereby audience imagination is allowed to thrive. Her texts, then, are the result of a poly-vocal process with input from Landon, Jerdan, and, crucially, the existence of a

⁷⁵ See Stephenson, *The Woman Behind L.E.L.*, p. 96; and Letitia Elizabeth Landon, *The Troubadour* in *The Troubadour: Catalogue of Pictures and Historical Sketches*, (Hurst, Robinson and Co., and A. Constable And Co., 1825), p. 204, in *Nineteenth Century Collections Online* <<http://gdc.galegroup.com/gdc/ncco/>> [accessed 28/04/19].

⁷⁶ Stephenson, *The Woman Behind L.E.L.*, pp. 96–97.

new culture of huge and varied audiences who Landon imagined would read her works in varying ways.

Conclusion

Evidently, then, Landon's poetry is indelibly related and indebted to her precursor, Byron. However, to reduce the poet to the 'female Byron' does her disservice. Having witnessed a poetic style that incorporates readerly expectations and an audience's desire for intimacy, Landon recalibrated the relationship to her own situation, following Jerdan's marketing strategy to use her gender and the established Romantic conceptions surrounding femininity as the base from which to construct that artificial intimacy with her audience. Having reorganised the Byronic style of poetry to her own female experience, Landon could then make her poetry multifaceted, offering simultaneous but differing readings to both her male and female audiences based on their respective desires. As we shall see in the next chapter, this poetry of pretence, which allows different readers various readings of her poems, goes even further than audiences divided by gender, and allows Landon to successfully navigate the new Romantic literary culture and the implications of her own popularity.

Audience imagination then, or at least Landon's expectations of it based on Jerdan and Byron's examples, figured as a creative influence upon Landon's compositional process. As we shall see, this allowed Landon to play with personae in order to make her personal subjectivity impossible to pinpoint, allowing audiences to see 'L.E.L.' their way, whilst also offering her a valve by which she could experiment with potentially radical ideas (with minimal risk of backlash due to her mobile subjectivity) or, indeed, simply enjoy playing with audiences. As I shall demonstrate, often she employed such personae to better represent the 'realities' of how popular authors work, especially female authors. That is not to say, though, that those personae offered glimpses into Landon's actual 'reality'.

Chapter Eight: Landon's Poetry Of Pretence - *The Improvisatrice* (1824), *The Troubadour* (1825), and *The Golden Violet* (1827)

In reply to Landon's claim that readers should not conflate her characters with herself in her preface to *The Venetian Bracelet* (1829), *The Monthly Review* declared that:

We venture to assert, that not one reader in fifty, of Miss Landon's poems, ever suspected that her views were so profoundly moral before. We must do her the credit to say, that she has preserved her disguise admirably. The sweet sorceress—she has cheated the world of its selfishness, simply by presenting to it a yellow leaf, or a decaying flower! Some persons thought that her fondness for such illustrations arose from the influence of an ill-requited passion. But that, she says, was all a joke! She is utterly unconscious of so great a misfortune!¹

The Monthly Review picks up on the crucial tension in Landon's works that this chapter shall discuss: the duality between the conflation that her commercial audience construct between Landon and her characters, and Landon's attempts to undermine such readings. As I will demonstrate, the 'sweet sorceress' was indeed playing a game that *The Monthly Review* was unaware of in this review.² Whilst a proportion of her audience would read Landon as *The Monthly Review* had, those discerning readers amongst her audience were able to see, and delight in, the deliberately constructed premise at the heart of Landon's longer poems which she presents through the use of mobile personae, one that simultaneously seeks to undermine such conflating reading practices, even as another persona upholds it.

Dorothy Mermin, commenting upon dramatic monologues, concludes that in women's poetry:

¹ 'Review Of The Venetian Bracelet, The Lost Pleiad, A History of the Lyre, and Other Poems, by L.E.L., and Satan. A Poem by Robert Montgomery' in *The Monthly Review*, 3rd ser., Issue 13, (February 1830), p. 162, quoted in Waters, p. 316.

² Unfortunately, the lack of accounts of readers reading Landon means that we cannot reliably demonstrate historical reading patterns, as has been possible in the Byron or Scott chapters. The poems, though, hint at and encourage such dual readings amongst Landon's audiences.

we are not made aware of the poet signaling to us from behind the speaker's back.... where men's poems have two sharply differentiated figures—in dramatic monologues, the poet and the dramatic speaker—in women's poems the two blur together.... In fact, unless the woman poet's mask was male, or exceedingly bizarre (Barrett Browning's infanticidal black American slave, for instance, in "The Runaway Slave At Pilgrim's Point"), she might not to be perceived as wearing a mask at all.³

Mermin's comments highlight the ways in which audience conceptions often shaped the interpretation of women's works. As I shall demonstrate, it is these very conceptions that Landon plays with and which leads the *Monthly Review* to scoff that Landon 'has preserved her disguise admirably'.

Whereas the previous chapter examined the 'romantic' Landon that part of her audience envisaged (which I label 'commercial' readers), this chapter shall analyse Landon's use of personae in her poetry to offer glimpses into the potential realities faced by popular female poets. Over twenty years after her death, Jane Williams described Landon thus: 'Her mind resembled a stormy sky, where the upper and lower strata of clouds are impelled in opposite directions; for under her most lofty and beautiful conceptions passed the counter-current of derisive scepticism.'⁴ Williams' comment illuminates the tension I will analyse: the upper strata adhering to the Burkean constructions of her commercial audience, utilising Byronic celebrity, and the lower working to undermine such ideas. Such a view is common in criticism of Landon, most notably in the pioneering work of Mellor. But much like cloud formations, that lower strata that Williams identifies is not, I posit, unified. Instead, Landon's poems offer multiple poses or personae which simultaneously undermine the very upper strata of her poems identified in the previous chapter. In her poems Landon may become the feminist, attacking Burkean conceptions of women, or in the next the remorseful poet regretting her career, or alter-

³ Quoted in Stephenson, *Woman Behind L.E.L.*, p. 108.

⁴ Williams is here quoted by Stephenson, although I believe she does not make enough of the perspicacity of the quote. I propose that, like clouds, Landon's 'lower strata' and 'upper strata' are not static or unified, but themselves tumultuous too, and that this was also what Williams was suggesting: non unified, often tumultuous stances Landon takes, from poem to poem and, even, line to line. This is, as I suggest, even to the point where, like clouds, there is no solid point of reference or a 'real' Landon in her poems, but rather multiple personae which actively represent and reflect her audiences' readings. See Stephenson, *The Woman Behind L.E.L.*, p. 8.

natively the pining Corinne of her poems' inspiration. Just like Williams' cloud formations, Landon's personae are ever shifting, difficult to pin down, and, to her observant audience, part of the fun of reading Landon.

This use of an upper, explicitly Burkean strata in her poems means that Landon is effectively in control of her objectification, and thus able to anticipate it by subtly circumventing masculine representations. It allows Landon to both sell herself as 'L.E.L.' the product, whilst also, to an observant audience, as the playful but insightful Landon of her poems' lower strata. Therefore, Landon pre-empts audience interpretation of her works and builds this into her poetry. But, crucially, she is not just writing with the desires of the commercial male and female audiences discussed in the former chapter in mind, but also an observant audience who enjoy seeing below the artifice and seemingly into the opinions based on Landon's 'reality' that she experiments with using her underlying personae. This duality is what leads to 'L.E.L.', a poetry of pretence, and the way in which she casts her shifting, contrarian statements concealed by Burkean conceptions of femininity.

This chapter, though, shall also comment on how, having adopted the Byronic model of celebrity, upon achieving fame, Landon went on to critique it, Byron's works, and the very basis his fame was built upon. Cronin posits that Landon presents her poetry as 'unpremeditated song, and yet there is always implicit in it a sidelong glance at the reader'.⁵ What he does not make clear is where this 'sidelong glance' originates from. I shall claim that in *The Improvisatrice* (1824), *The Golden Violet* (1827), and *The Troubadour* (1825), there are three figures present: Landon's Burkean female characters, the conflated 'L.E.L.' that is imagined by Landon's commercial audience (although Landon aids them in producing it), and the often overlooked, mercurial figure that represents the narrator of *Romance and Reality*. This third figure is an example of Landon's use of personae, offering up potentially controversial views that are seemingly rooted in Landon's experience as a female poet, and the persona who casts a sidelong glance at her audience to sarcastically question whether they buy into the spells of the first two figures. Personae such as this third figure make themselves visible only in brief appearances to those receptive within her audience. Landon's various personae are not always consistent, but it is precisely this play that her observant audience seem to enjoy and which causes such revelation when it becomes the dominant mode of Landon's communication and relationship with audience in *Romance and Reality*. Landon's texts

⁵ Cronin, *Romantic Victorians*, p. 87.

are, I want to argue, the shifting, multiple products of this intersection of forces in the late Romantic print market.

Landon's Mobile Third Persona In *The Improvisatrice*

In her preface to *The Venetian Bracelet*, Landon states that 'Love [is] my source of song. I can only say, that for a woman, whose influence and whose sphere must be in the affections, what subject can be more fitting than one which it is her peculiar province to refine, spiritualise, and exalt?'⁶ Once again, she is encouraging the male view that women must be speaking from experience, thus reinforcing her construction of her poetry of pretence. She allows them to believe the image they have built of her. Later, though, she reminds readers that they should beware of the trap of conflating her with her characters by stating that:

With regard to the frequent application of my works to myself, considering that I sometimes portrayed love unrequited, then betrayed, and again destroyed by death—may I hint the conclusions are not quite logically drawn, as assuredly the same mind cannot have suffered such varied modes of misery. However, if I must have an unhappy passion, I can only console myself with my own perfect unconsciousness of so great a misfortune.⁷

The two opposing statements, just a few lines apart, display Landon's discomfort with such a necessary evil in order to maintain her popularity. As I have mentioned, despite this plea, parts of her audience, set in their gendered views of poetry, chose to ignore her, resulting in *The Monthly Review*'s comments at the start of this chapter. What is clear from Landon's shifting stance regarding conflation, as well as the incredulous *Monthly Review*'s comments, is that she was entirely aware that, regardless of her actions, the audience tendency to read their own construction of 'L.E.L.' from her poems would always take precedence over attempts to refute such readings. As a celebrity, her life would always be public property and therefore open to uncontrollable (albeit potentially guided) intrusion and speculation. Indeed, a number of critics have highlighted

⁶ Landon, 'Preface' to *The Venetian Bracelet*, p. 103.

⁷ Ibid.

this. Terence Allan Hoagwood and Kathryn Ledbetter demonstrate that critics of Landon, both contemporary and modern, have often assumed that ‘the feelings described in a poem can be attributed to [the] writer’.⁸ As accurate as this is, I wish to argue that it is more complex than this.

Landon’s ‘observant’ audience did not simply conflate her character’s emotions with her own, despite Landon often encouraging them to do so. Indeed, neither did they discount that her character’s emotions might indeed also be hers. Instead I wish to argue, along similar lines to Jonas Cope, that there is a freedom and mobility present within her texts and Landon’s self-representation.⁹ As Cope argues:

[Landon’s] speakers are all earnestness and conviction, and she allows if not encourages readers to interpret their sentiments as hers—which they customarily did. But her various literary modes and all the incompatible ideas she appears to endorse that her view of art has little or nothing to do with the subjectivity of the artist. Instead she comes across as more of a faceless shuffler and artificer of doctrines. Whatever sense of the personal character of the poet we can draw from the texts is, at best, an accident or epiphenomenon of the creative process.¹⁰

Cope suggests that Landon’s style creates a breakdown in subjectivity, and that this leads to a lack of internal consistency. I would counter this by suggesting that, whilst she does endorse occasionally ‘incompatible ideas’, this is not to say that she believes art to have little do with the author’s subjectivity. In fact, Landon endorses a view of subjectivity that is flexible, playful, and supports the ability of the individual to experiment with ideas, styles, and personae. She may even discard an experiment altogether. However, this flexibility, due to her financial need for an audience, must remain secondary in importance (and thus largely hidden) in her longer poetry, hence the use of a poetry of pretence that guides her audience towards their own construction of ‘L.E.L.’. Her own subjectivity, therefore, remains largely hidden compared to her audience’s construction of ‘L.E.L.’. Throughout her works, Landon strives to highlight the tensions

⁸ Terence Allan Hoagwood and Kathryn Ledbetter, *‘Colour’d Shadows’: Contexts in Publishing, Printing, and Reading Nineteenth-Century British Women Writers*, (Basingstoke; Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), p. 4.

⁹ See Jonas Cope, “‘A Series of Small Inconsistencies’: Letitia Landon and the Sewn-Together Subject’ in *Studies in Romanticism*, Vol. 52, Issue 3, (2013), pp. 363–387 (p. 369).

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 378.

between ‘romance’ (or the over-romanticising of her commercial audience) and the more ‘realistic’ way she writes utilising various personae to play and experiment, often expressing shifting viewpoints that could reflect her changing experience as a female poet. Part of the point, though, is that the ‘reality’ she offers an observant audience, could be reality or could not. She neither confirms nor denies this, but simply allows them the pleasure of speculation.

In contrast to Cope, I argue that Landon’s subjectivity is by its nature mobile. The ‘L.E.L.’ constructed by her audience—based on conceptions of femininity—is certainly there. But so is another Landon, one who glances slyly at her readers, inviting them to question the construction they help create. The tension between ‘romance’ and ‘reality’ in her works, then, mirrors the tension between the subjectivities in her poem: that of her characters, the audience-perceived conflated poetess (which Landon intermittently encourages or discourages), and other personae active in the poems. These personae, sometimes evident through Landon’s narrators or the actions of the plot are the ones who cast that ‘sidelong glance’ at Landon’s readers which Cronin identifies. They allow Landon to experiment or play with potentially subversive and often contradictory ideas. I further wish to contend that in Landon’s early works such as *The Improvisatrice* this use of personae (or more specifically, her third figure, in this poem) operates on a level reliant upon, and deliberately masked by, Landon’s poetry of pretence.

Landon’s use of a stance or ‘third figure’ in *The Improvisatrice* and *The Golden Violet* presents a particularly striking example of her playful use of personae. Upon the Improvisatrice’s death, a new speaker is introduced to the poem.¹¹ Much like the Improvisatrice, this speaker is unnamed. Harriet Linkin argues that this narrator’s anonymity and the lack of a ‘logical framework that accounts for the improvisatrice’s portion of the narration’ allows Landon to seize ‘authorial control to contrast her subversive efforts with the improvisatrice’s adherence to conventional “woman’s power”’. This allows Landon, as poet, to frame her construct, revealing it as a construct.¹² As Linkin identifies ‘Landon deliberately withholds her identity— if she is, indeed, the concluding narrator—to disable her reader’s constructing of her as the female poet whose birthright and whose woman’s power require that she pour her “full and burning heart / In song”’.¹³ As Linkin highlights, this shift from unnamed improvisatrice to anonymous

¹¹ See Landon, *The Improvisatrice*, p. 102.

¹² Linkin, p. 179.

¹³ Ibid.

narrator insists on the separation of Landon's figuration of the poetess and Landon herself as the controlling female poet.¹⁴ Linkin further goes on to state that with this narrator 'Landon inhabits a role not yet imagined by the culturally conditioned improvisatrice, though already enacted by Mary Tighe: the controlling female poet who effects an aesthetic liminality that frees her from the limits imposed on the specularized body her character represents.'¹⁵

As this third persona is free to highlight the artificiality of Landon's poetry, it then details how Lorenzo represents the controlling role of men in literary culture, subverting the very gendered conceptions the Improvisatrice (and thus, through conflation, 'L.E.L.') seemingly upholds. In doing so, Landon passes comment on her role in the relationship between herself and her audience. Upon the Improvisatrice's death, her last request to her lover Lorenzo is that he should 'Yet live in Love's dear memory. / Thou wilt remember me,—my name'.¹⁶ However, as Linkin highlights, when the unknown narrator takes over the poem for the final stanza, Lorenzo's memorial for the Improvisatrice is one of the 'pictures shone around the dome' in which the Improvisatrice is described thus:

She leant upon a harp:—one hand
Wandered, like snow, amid the chords;
The lips were opening with such life,
You almost heard the silvery words.
She looked a form of light and life,
All soul, all passion, and all fire.¹⁷

The picture is accompanied by a funeral urn with the inscription 'Lorenzo to his Minstrel Love.'¹⁸

Despite the Improvisatrice's request for Lorenzo to remember her, the inscription upon her urn does not name her, but only describes her via her role or how Lorenzo saw her: as his 'Minstrel Love'. Furthermore, the Improvisatrice in the painting is captured as 'All soul, all passion, and all fire'. However, it is ultimately a cold, dead, and

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Ibid., p. 174.

¹⁶ Landon, *The Improvisatrice*, p. 101.

¹⁷ See Linkin, p. 178; and Landon, *The Improvisatrice*, pp. 103, 104.

¹⁸ Landon, *The Improvisatrice*, p. 105.

still picture. When the Improvisatrice was alive and ‘all fire’, Lorenzo did not appreciate her, yet now he weeps over her still portrait. Linkin’s reading demonstrates that the implication of the passage is that in order for the Improvisatrice to be loved by man, she must relinquish her ‘soul’, ‘passion’, and ‘fire’ to become the cold, still portrait Lorenzo deems worthy of his affection. This is bolstered by her observation that the painter of the Improvisatrice’s portrait is never identified. However, it is implied that it is Lorenzo as the picture is his idealised female image and the picture ‘never did the painter’s dream / Shape thing so gloriously fair’, that he was its creator.¹⁹ The Improvisatrice is thus remembered through the lens of Lorenzo’s idealised recollection of her. He only appreciates her once she is devoid of her ‘fire’ and ‘passion’ and portrayed according to his own desires.

The passage delivers a damning comment upon Landon’s relationship with parts of her audience and her construction of a poetry with pretence at its core. Despite her attempts to distance herself from her portrayals of ‘love unrequited, then betrayed, and again destroyed by death’, the passage demonstrates that her wishes would always be overlooked in favour of her readers’ desires and interpretations, much like *The Monthly Review* did to her and Lorenzo to the Improvisatrice.²⁰ Just as the Improvisatrice had to forego her ‘fire’ in order to be desired, Landon must veil her own critiques of Romantic culture in order to maintain her audience’s illusion of intimacy with their constructed ‘L.E.L.’ based on gendered conceptions.²¹ The Improvisatrice’s fate thus demonstrates Landon’s confidence that the commercial proportion of her audience, led by their gendered conceptions and desired belief in intimacy, will always be oblivious to her subtle critiques of them, their reading style, and their gendered viewpoints as a whole: ultimately, their interpretation will prevail, blinding them to the sight of Landon’s subversions.

¹⁹ See Linkin, pp. 178–179; and Landon, *The Improvisatrice*, p. 103.

²⁰ See ‘Review Of The Venetian Bracelet, The Lost Pleiad, A History of the Lyre, and Other Poems, by L.E.L., and Satan. A Poem by Robert Montgomery’ in *The Monthly Review*, quoted in Waters, p. 261.

²¹ Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar discuss this phenomenon imposed upon women writers in their study of female writing under a patriarchal society. They state that ‘[s]ince both patriarchy and its texts subordinate and imprison women, before women can even attempt that pain which is so rigourously kept from them they must escape just those male texts which, defining them as “Cyphers,” deny them the autonomy to formulate alternatives to the authority that has imprisoned them and kept them from attempting the pen.’ For this discussion of how a patriarchal society imprisoned female artists, see Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar, *The Madwoman in the Attic: The Woman Writer and the Nineteenth-Century Literary Imagination*, (New Haven, CT; Yale University Press, 2000), p. 13; and for broader discussion, see pp. xii–xix, 1–75.

Landon's critique of such a reading practice that privileges audience ideals of 'L.E.L.' over Landon herself goes deeper than this, however. Indeed, Landon plays with the way her audience read her works by actively displaying the consequences of such conflating reading practices: that, instead of seeing Landon, her audience see only what they want to see, or the constructed 'L.E.L.' of their imaginations. Again, this is communicated through a third figure, exemplified best in *The Improvisatrice* by her unnamed narrator at its close. For instance, the Improvisatrice's reaction to Lorenzo is to retire and sing love songs to herself, seeking 'the gallery' in order:

To pass the noontide there, and trace
 Some statue's shape of loveliness—
 Some saint, some nymph, or muse's face.
 There, in my rapture, I could throw
 My pencil and its hues aside,
 And, as the vision past me, pour
 My song of passion, joy, and pride.²²

Montweiler suggests that '[w]ith this portrayal of the composing process, Landon explores how love poetry celebrates behaviour that is on one level inherently narcissistic'.²³ By acknowledging that love is, to an extent, narcissistic, I propose that Landon is also subtly critiquing her audience's Byronic reading practice when they read 'L.E.L.' through her characters and position themselves as potential a lover or rescuer of her. Rather than actually desiring Landon, they desire their own conceptions of the poetess which is itself a narcissistic act in that those desires are a reflection of themselves, much like the Improvisatrice's composition of idealistic songs or Lorenzo worshipping his painting. The fact that Lorenzo's portrait is described by Landon's unknown narrator stands as an example of her third figure standing to one side offering the 'sidelong glance' at her readers that Cronin identifies.²⁴ Ultimately, by reading Landon through her characters, readers' desires are revealed as being self-delusive. The observant reader then, picking up on the message underlying the apparently romantic poem, is warned against falling into the narcissistic reading practice of imagining 'L.E.L.' as the culmination of their gendered desires as they may well be disappointed.

²² Landon, *The Improvisatrice*, p. 47.

²³ Montweiler, p. 24.

²⁴ Cronin, *Romantic Victorians*, p. 87.

Moments like these, which highlight the necessary tyranny of Romantic, gendered reading practices over a female poet if she is to be popular, thus offer the observant amongst Landon's audience a very different pleasure than imagining themselves as either a saviour to 'L.E.L.' or the safe exploration of female erotics, as the previous chapter argued. Indeed, they provide insight into the balancing act that Landon must perform in order to negotiate her popularity in such a precarious period of divided audiences. They allow Landon's observant audience to believe in a form of intimacy with Landon herself (rather than a constructed 'L.E.L.') in that they see the third persona in *The Improvisatrice* reveal potential flashes of candid thoughts or viewpoints based in Landon's experiences as a female poet with preoccupations of how that affects her relationship with audience. Unfortunately, Landon's letters offer no conclusive proof that such a critique is her 'real' belief. Indeed, Landon's technique invites us to question whether there ever could be a single 'real' belief that a text would communicate. However, due to her position in Romantic era culture, such preoccupations with gendered reading styles and their implications on Landon's own reputation seem a natural consequence. Under this assumption, the pretence in Landon's works once more reveals the fault line between the 'romantic' reading style of her commercial audience, and brief flashes into Landon's own experiences of the 'reality' she hints at. Whether either view is 'reality' is not something we can ever finally know, and perhaps not something, for Landon, that we should desire to know. But Landon's texts actively invite readers to take such a stance, feeling themselves to be the privileged few who have glimpsed a deeper truth. Such moments point to the way that Landon's creativity depends on a doubled relationship with her readers, inviting her audience to reflect on the way that the text they are reading is the product of multiple 'touches', including the necessity of appeasing those in power, whether men or the market.

Feminist Personae In *The Golden Violet* And *The Troubadour*

Landon's deployment of a narrator, or 'third figure' standing apart from her characters and her audience's ideal 'L.E.L.', also extends into *The Golden Violet*. Subverting the gendered reading practices of her commercial audience, Landon's narrator asks:

How can I tell of battle field,
 I never listed brand to wield;
 Or dark ambition's pathway try,

In truth I never look'd so high;
 Or stern revenge, or hatred fell,
 Of what I know not, can I tell?
 I soar not on such lofty wings,
 My lute has not so many strings;
 Its dower is but a humble dower,
 And I who call upon its aid,
 My power is but a woman's power,
 Of softness and of sadness made.²⁵

Landon's question—'how can I, a female poet, write martial poetry of "battle field" and "dark ambition"'—is an ironic one considering the poem included exactly such martial scenes portrayed by the preceding bards who compete for the golden violet, all of which were constructed by Landon herself. She then goes on to justify her apparent inability to write such stern poetry by ironically referencing *The Improvisatrice* in that her 'power is but a woman's power', meaning that everything a woman writes ought to be soft, extempore, and from experience like the Improvisatrice's words. The reference thus compares Landon's ability (exemplified by this third narrating figure) to write poetry unsuited to female writers in contrast to her Improvisatrice who is constrained by audience conceptions to only be able to write what is within 'a woman's power': improvisational, feminised poetry.²⁶ Landon's third figure mocks the very beliefs her commercial audience hold. By referencing the fact that a woman could not possibly write martial poetry, despite having done so in that very poem, again highlights that her poem is itself a construct.

In this sense, Landon's third figure adopts an early form of feminism by displaying the irony of Romantic gendered notions. Landon offers a similar position in *The Troubadour*, employing a third persona in the form of her narrator in order to provide a feminist commentary, via that 'sidelong glance' to her observant audience which highlights the double standards between consequences of male and female love. Stephenson illuminates that when Raymond falls in love with Adeline, he discovers that 'she, alas

²⁵ Landon, *The Golden Violet*, pp. 237–238.

²⁶ Indeed, for an exploration of why Landon employs the chivalric tradition of minstrelsy in *The Troubadour* and *The Golden Violet* as a means of highlighting the artificiality of gendered conceptions in the Romantic literary marketplace, see Erik Simpson, *Literary Minstrelsy, 1770–1830: Minstrels and Improvisers in British, Irish, and American Literature*, (Basingstoke; Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), pp. 125–132.

for her false smile! / ADELINÉ loved him not the while'. The narrator then asks that Raymond 'not with one spell part, / The veil that binds his eyes and heart. / Woe for Love when his eyes shall be / Open'd upon reality!'²⁷ When his love is not reciprocated, Raymond turns to remembering his old flame Eva. However, Landon gives Leila, another female character in the poem, a very different fate when her narrator asks 'Oh! why should woman ever love, / Trusting to one false star above; / And fling her little chance away / Of sunshine for its treacherous ray'.²⁸ When Leila falls in love with Raymond, but that love is not reciprocated, she is doomed to death.²⁹ As the Troubadour reveals himself as Raymond at the poem's conclusion, winning the golden violet from Eva, Leila's fate is quickly forgotten. But the disparities in fate, despite unrequited love on both Raymond and Leila's parts, subtly highlights the differences met by males and females if Landon's poems are to be successfully sold. If Landon is to sell her poetry in a male dominated literary culture and marketplace, then, in order to maintain her audience's self-delusion as gallant gentleman, her female characters must meet a dark fate. Her male characters, meanwhile, are free to live on if they are to potentially triumph (as Raymond does in his tourney). Additionally, Leila's fate also warns Landon's female audience that whilst men, in a male dominated world, may escape the consequences of desire (for example, Byron riding scandal to greater popularity), women cannot (with *The Wasp's* attacks on Landon being an example of such double standards). Thus, with both her commercial audience who construct 'L.E.L.' based on their own conceptions (predominantly a male audience), and her observant female audience in mind, Landon has produced poetry that appeals to the former, whilst also subtly subverting their reading practices to provide a warning directed at the latter.

Her third figure thus simultaneously critiques Romantic gendered notions, despite her poetry's success relying upon them for audience enjoyment and engagement. Landon evidently included her double-sided game with the intent that those observant amongst her audience could enjoy the interplay between the two readings. Occasional responses to Landon's works (such as the review of *Romance and Reality* by *The Athenaeum* that began this chapter) acknowledge the duality of her writings, but unfortu-

²⁷ Stephenson, *The Woman Behind L.E.L.*, pp. 81–83; and Landon, *The Troubadour*, pp. 99, 102.

²⁸ Landon, *The Troubadour*, p. 204.

²⁹ See *Ibid.*, p. 205.

nately no currently known sources state that this is the reason for her poetry's popularity.³⁰ By examining it closely, we can see that Landon formulates a poetry that has her 'commercial' audience's conceptions at the heart of it, but also a pretence that allows her to simultaneously appeal to her 'observant' readers. Both readings are available. As I shall show, this critical third persona emerges fully from behind pretence in *Romance and Reality*. Consequently, Landon allows subtly deployed personae to convey potentially disruptive viewpoints which seemingly borrow from Landon's own position in a male-dominated literary landscape.³¹

Beyond Byron

Having achieved fame through her emulation of the Byronic model of celebrity (deployed on different terms) Landon, as her career progressed, grew to question the literary technique and relationship with audience such a model entailed. As highlighted throughout her career, Landon's works displayed a deep fascination with Byron from emulation of his *Eastern Tales* in *The Improvisatrice*, to discussion of his poetry in *Romance and Reality*.³² However, whilst Landon had constructed her fame by commanding a Byronic audience geared towards reading texts as illicit confessions of the author, there was one crucial difference in the way her fame functioned. Landon indeed encouraged conflation between her characters and their author in an attempt to appeal to the Byronic audience she had inherited.³³ Knowles, for instance, identifies that Landon's conflation of *The Golden Violet*'s Erinna's 'mournful history / of woman's tenderness and woman's tears' works to conflate Erinna and Landon's emotions as one, much like Childe Harold's with Byron's.³⁴ Yet, as the previous chapter highlighted,

³⁰ See 'Review of *Romance and Reality* by L. E. L.' in *The Athenaeum*, quoted in Knowles, 'Celebrity, Femininity and Masquerade', p. 261.

³¹ Of course, as I have attempted to demonstrate, whether these viewpoints are truly representative of Landon's reality or subjectivity matters little. It offers her 'observant' audience exactly what they desire: opportunities to view themselves as clever and privileged readers, who witness the interplay of influences present throughout the construction of Landon's texts.

³² Indeed, in *Romance And Reality*, Landon stages a debate over who is the better poet between Scott and Byron, before introducing Wordsworth as a comparison. I shall discuss Landon's involvement with Wordsworth later. See Landon, *Romance And Reality*, vol. 2, pp. 116–119.

³³ In an essay on Felicia Hemans, for instance, Landon offers up an example of this by stating: 'There cannot be a greater error than to suppose that the poet does not feel what he writes. What an extraordinary, I might say, impossible view, is this to take of an art more connected with emotion than any of its sister sciences.' See Letitia Elizabeth Landon, 'On the Character of Mrs. Hemans' Writings' in *Letitia Elizabeth Landon: Selected Writings*, p. 173.

³⁴ See Knowles, 'Poetry, Fame and Scandal', p. 1114–1115; and Letitia Elizabeth Landon, 'Erinna' in *The Golden Violet*, pp. 266–267.

Landon also geared her audience's assumption of intimacy with 'L.E.L.' not upon personal scandal, like Byron in his *Eastern Tales*, but upon her gender and cultural assumptions of it.³⁵

However, as her longer poems through the 1820s have shown above, Landon evidently experienced an alienation and frustration with such a reading practice by her audience and, consequently, a writing style that demanded the pretence of adhering to Romantic gendered conceptions. Eventually, with an established following, Landon could push back against those conceptions. Indeed, she did this by critiquing the very basis of her popularity: her emulation of Byron. In doing so, Landon was also self-consciously challenging the audience she had commandeered who read an intimate connection to their own constructed 'L.E.L.' in her works. For example, her most explicitly mocking work about Byron was 'Experiments, Or The Lover Of Ennui' in the annual *The Book Of Beauty* (1833). In it, 'Cecil Forrester' a 'rich, high-born, and clever' young aristocrat who attended Eton is driven from England by his debts, and retreats to the East. Whilst there he falls in love with 'Gulnare' who, upon lifting her veil, is revealed to be 'so fat, that it was with the greatest difficulty she could stand; and an exquisite tattooed wreath of hyacinths, of a fine blue, began at her chin, meandered over her cheeks, and covered her forehead'.³⁶ Lord Cecil's misadventure is undoubtedly a caricature of Byron himself, a handsome aristocrat driven to the romance of the East, with Gulnare as an obvious reference to Byron's heroine in *The Corsair*. Much like Conrad in *The Corsair*, Cecil (or Byron) runs scared from a woman who does not conform to idealised gender conceptions of the age. As Adriana Craciun highlights, it also stands, much like the fates of her heroines, as a warning that readers (or, indeed, writers) who lose themselves in the romance of literature, may indeed receive a nasty shock when reality bites (or when L.E.L. turns out not to be what they envisaged).³⁷

This challenge to gendered conceptions goes further in the same annual with her poem 'The Enchantress'. Craciun identifies 'The Enchantress' as Landon's most Byronic poem which contains a tale of the biblical fall rewritten from a feminist perspec-

³⁵ As I have highlighted, though, Byron came to be frustrated and eventually played with such a reading later in his career.

³⁶ Letitia Elizabeth Landon, 'Experiments, Or The Lover From Ennui' in *The Book of Beauty: Comprising a Collection of Tales, Poems, &c.*, (Philadelphia, PA; E.L. Carey & A. Hart, 1833), pp. 205, 221, in *Hathi Trust Digital Library* <<https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/>> [accessed 28/04/19].

³⁷ Craciun, pp. 205–206.

tive. Crucially, though, Craciun notes that Landon ‘draws attention to the dangerous misogyny of Byron’s heroes, their idealisation and destruction of women, but does so while exploring the desirable possibilities of such a Luciferean role for the woman poet’.³⁸ For instance, Landon’s frequent allusions to Byronic texts address the misogynistic portrayal of Byron’s heroines, with the unnamed Enchantress possessing forbidden knowledge from ‘sciences untaught’, linking her directly to Astarte from Byron’s *Manfred*. Like Byron’s Astarte, the Enchantress possesses Manfred’s powers and disillusionment but also pity and tenderness, something Manfred lacked, as demonstrated by her reaching down ‘to assume the life of a dying Medora, out of pity for her and her suffering parents’.³⁹ Landon’s ‘Medora’, redeemed by the Enchantress, saves the suffering original ‘Medora’ of Byron’s *The Corsair* from the grisly fate she met in his poem. Thus the contrast of Landon’s overreaching Enchantress displays how, in Byron’s poetry and in the original biblical source, the seeking of forbidden knowledge is attained mainly at the expense of women.⁴⁰ As Craciun states, ‘Medora’s death in *The Corsair* is also avenged, for the Enchantress used her dearly bought powers to assume Medora’s identity, choosing to become the long-suffering Medora, Byron’s most passive heroine, rather than remain an alienated overreacher like Manfred’.⁴¹

Craciun’s reading of ‘The Enchantress’ and ‘Experiments’, again presents a feminist challenge to Byron’s works. After a decade of writing a poetry of pretence to appeal to gendered audience desires, Landon employed the works of her precursor in order to highlight the detrimental cost to women such literature had, the double standards in reception of male and female writers, as well as to undermine the conflation of her audience’s own Romantic ideals with the writer. By highlighting the misogyny that Byron’s poetry is built upon, Landon is subtly communicating a powerful point about Romantic culture: that women are not afforded the same conditions from which to reach the print market as men despite their abilities.⁴² More importantly in terms of the form of creativity that Landon represents, though, having taken Byron’s works as a model for her relationship with audience (which she adapted), Landon witnessed the detrimental

³⁸ Ibid., p. 205.

³⁹ See Ibid., p. 207.

⁴⁰ Craciun also astutely highlights the similarities between Leoni and Lolah of Landon’s *The Enchantress* with Leila of Byron’s *The Giaour* in order to highlight the dangerous fates that befell Byron’s female characters and, potentially, readers. For this, see Ibid., pp. 204–208

⁴¹ Ibid., p. 208.

⁴² This is best represented by the contrast between Manfred’s eventual failure and the Enchantress’s successes.

effects such a relationship had upon herself as a woman (portraying them in the Improvisatrice's fate, for example). She thus challenges her audience's reading patterns and beliefs in gendered conceptions (which they, too, partially inherited from Byron) by critiquing the misogyny and detachment from reality Byron's texts required. Consequently, utilising Byron, Landon is constructing her works with a challenge to her audience to actually read the underlying critiques her own works present (through her use of personae), and not to simply read their own desires in Landon's characters and in 'L.E.L.'. Thus, Landon constructs an attempt to persuade her audience to distinguish between their own 'romance' and the misogynistic, brutal 'reality' her characters often experience (frequently overlooked by her audience), which is similar to the pressures Landon must endure as a female writer (for example, having to write a gendered poetry of pretence in the first place). In this sense, however different their approach to the Romantic reading audience might be, Landon is, as Wordsworth advises, attempting to 'creat[e] the taste by which [she is] to be enjoyed'.⁴³ Her texts function by interacting with her audience, and asking that audience to reflect on the terms of that interaction. Having achieved popularity, Landon could more freely challenge its basis.

Frustrations With Fame

Writing to S. C. Hall in 1837, Landon reflected upon her career by stating that 'mine has been a successful career ... But my life has convinced me that a public career must be a painful one to a woman. The envy and the notoriety carry with them a bitterness which predominates over the praise'.⁴⁴ In a separate letter, she also explained that:

I would give all the reputation I have gained, or am ever likely to gain, by writing books, for one great triumph on the stage. The praise of critics or friends may be more or less sincere; but the spontaneous thunder of applause of a mixed multitude of utter strangers, uninfluenced by any feelings but those excited at the moment, is an acknowledgement of gratification surpassing, in my opinion, any other description of approbation.⁴⁵

⁴³ Wordsworth, 'Essay Supplementary', p. 80.

⁴⁴ Quoted in Watt, pp. 168–169.

⁴⁵ Quoted in Stephenson, *Woman Behind L.E.L.*, pp. 108–109.

Rather than seeking lasting fame based upon a long relationship, Landon seems rather to prefer the ‘spontaneous thunder of applause’ which is ‘uninfluenced by any feelings but those excited at the moment’. The comment suggests that Landon would prefer adulation that acknowledged that the performance she had just given was exactly that: a performance. On the stage, Landon would have been a character, adopting a role temporarily that her audience would appreciate as a role which did not represent the true feelings of the actress. With her poetry, though, her adulation depended upon her audience believing that they had unadulterated access to the real Landon: that her characters represented the woman herself. With such conceptions, their applause was not uninfluenced and spontaneous but influenced by prior reading patterns and gendered Romantic conceptions. Indeed the ‘public career’ of a woman, complete with its necessary duality in order to adhere to audience (or society’s) perceptions is, for Landon, a necessary but ‘painful’ one if that woman desires success.

Such a longstanding relationship whereby her audience demands that Landon adhere to their gendered conceptions, fulfilling the idealised ‘L.E.L.’ of their imaginations, created for Landon a frustration that is evident throughout her career. As I have demonstrated, this is exemplified in the *Improvisatrice*’s enshrinement in a portrait dictated by Lorenzo. Accordingly, as Leighton notes, there are numerous moments in which Landon ‘freezes the woman into a picture, a statue, and work of art’.⁴⁶ In her poem ‘Corinne At The Cape Of Misena’ (1831), Landon states that ‘Corinne / Is but another name for her who wrote,’ much like ‘L.E.L.’ or Landon.⁴⁷ Evidently, the names may be interchangeable but it is the woman who holds her audience’s fascination, and, additionally, an idealised woman whose name matters little. That woman’s representation will ultimately be dictated by a masculine literary culture and her audience’s desires, much like *The Literary Magnet* did when it declared that the ‘wild and romantic being she describes as the *Improvisatrice*, seems to be the very counterpart of her sentimental self’.⁴⁸ Such frustrations are thus evident throughout Landon’s career, although as it matured, these frustrations became more explicit, no longer hiding behind the pretence of adhering with audience desires.

⁴⁶ The ending of *The Improvisatrice*, for instance, stands as the most prominent example with her memory defined by Lorenzo’s portrait of her. See Landon, *The Improvisatrice*, pp. 102–105; and Leighton, p. 61.

⁴⁷ Letitia Elizabeth Landon, ‘Corinne At The Cape Of Misena’ in *Letitia Elizabeth Landon: Selected Writings*, ll. 38–39.

⁴⁸ Quoted in Stephenson, *Woman behind L.E.L.*, p. 64.

In her poem mourning the death of her fellow female poet, 'Stanzas On The Death of Mrs. Hemans' (1835), Landon states:

Ah! dearly purchased is the gift,
The gift of song like thine;
A fated doom is hers who stands
The priestess of the shrine.
The crowd—they only see the crown,
They only hear the hymn;—
They mark not that the cheek is pale,
And that the eye is dim.⁴⁹

This highlights a similar point to her previous poems: the 'crowd' see only the 'crown', their own idealised image of both Hemans and Landon, without seeing the dimness in their eyes brought about by having to perform for that audience. The opening line, though, echoes a similar one in Landon's later poem on the same poet, 'Felicia Hemans' (1838): 'Was not this purchased all too dearly?—never / Can fame atone for all that fame hath cost'.⁵⁰ Adhering to Landon's mobile use of personae, both poems imagine Hemans and Landon herself as De Staël's Corinne (a figure often deployed by Landon): a performer whose passionate creations for her audience cost her her life. By asking 'Was not this purchased all too dearly', Landon is directly positioning herself, and Hemans, as, like Corinne, sacrificing themselves for their audiences.

The poem thus questions whether Hemans's death, or Landon offering her own subjectivity to audience expectation, is a worthy sacrifice for fame: ultimately, what they are famous for is not themselves, but an idealised figure their audience demanded. As both poets neglected to follow their 'woman's heart[s]' in favour of upholding their performance like Corinne, 'Unkindly are they they judged—unkindly treated—/ By careless tongues and by ungenerous words'.⁵¹ Invoking Corinne in this way works within the traditional gendering of women: what they need is a man's love, and performing constantly in public evidently harms them. As Corinne's reception is influenced by her audience's desires to connect with the real woman they see on stage (thus

⁴⁹ Letitia Elizabeth Landon, 'Stanzas On The Death Of Mrs. Hemans' in *Letitia Elizabeth Landon: Selected Writings*, ll. 49–56.

⁵⁰ Letitia Elizabeth Landon, 'Felicia Hemans' in *Letitia Elizabeth Landon: Selected Writings*, ll. 33–34.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, ll. 57–58.

imposing their own ideals onto her), she is unlike an actress whose reception is ‘uninfluenced by any feelings but those excited at the moment’ as she is adopting a different role (and the audience is well aware that it is a role) with almost every performance. Landon’s use of a Corinne persona, then, is arguably due to her desire to display her similarities to a character who must adhere to audience ideals even at the cost of her life. This is in contrast to her desires, exemplified in her letter to S. C. Hall, where she would rather have her audience aware that she is adopting roles. Such a position would mean she is free from having to write a poetry of pretence which sacrifices her own subjectivity permanently to audience conceptions.⁵²

Indeed, one explicit example of Landon’s late frustration with her relationship with audience is her poem ‘Memory’ (1841). Kari Lokke identifies that ‘Memory’ displays Landon’s struggle to be free of concern for audience opinion, something Landon, for financial need, cannot be.⁵³ She begs her audience to ‘Withdraw, I pray, from me thy strong control’ and states that ‘To dream and to create has been my fate, / Alone, apart from life’s more busy scheming; / I fear to think that I may find too late / Vain was the toil, and idle was the dreaming’.⁵⁴ Evidently as her career advanced, as critics have highlighted, regret crept into Landon’s reflections on her poetic career and public position.⁵⁵ Whilst she acknowledges that ‘Surely the spirit is its own free will’, in the immediate following line, she also asks ‘What should o’ermaster mine to vain complying’.⁵⁶

⁵² Later poems such as ‘A Summer’s Evening Tale’ (1829), ‘The Princess Victoria’ (1832), and ‘Memory’ (1841) also display such frustrations late in her career. ‘A Summer’s Evening Tale’ (1829) for instance, asks ‘Are we not like that actor of old time, / Who wore his mask so long, his features took / Its likeness?—thus we feign we do not feel, / Until our feelings are forgotten things’ and ‘Ode To Princess Victoria’ sympathises with a girl whose life will be sacrificed to her subjects. See Letitia Elizabeth Landon, ‘A Summer’s Evening Tale’ in *Letitia Elizabeth Landon: Selected Writings*, ll. 26–29; and ‘The Princess Victoria’ in *Fisher’s Drawing Room Scrapbook*, (London; Fisher, Son, And Company, 1832), pp. 5–6, in *Hathi Trust Digital Library* <<https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/>> [accessed 28/04/19].

⁵³ Kari Lokke, ‘Poetry As Self Consumption: Women Writers And Their Audiences In British And German Romanticism’ in *Romantic Poetry*, ed. Angela Esterhammer, (Amsterdam; John Benjamins Publishing, 2002), p. 102.

⁵⁴ Letitia Elizabeth Landon, “‘Memory’” in Three Extracts From The Diary Of A Week’ in *Letitia Elizabeth Landon: Selected Writings*, ll. 3, 13–16.

⁵⁵ Exemplifying this scholarly view of alienation late in Landon’s career, Leighton describes her as ‘exhausted’ later in her career. McGann and Riess describe her as a ‘poet of disenchantments’ with her poetry standing as ‘disillusions’. Likewise, Stephenson argues that Landon’s own experience is mirrored in her characters, whereby ‘[t]ime after time, Landon’s poetesses are struck by the desire to reach out to others, to attempt to expand the sympathies of the world, to establish communion with their kind, all the things that are accepted wisdom suggests they should do, and each time they are inevitably disillusioned by the contract with reality.’ See Jerome McGann and Daniel Riess, ‘Introduction’ in Landon, *Letitia Elizabeth Landon: Selected Writings*, p. 24,23; Leighton, p. 54; and Stephenson, *Woman Behind L.E.L.*, p. 110.

⁵⁶ Landon, “‘Memory’”, ll. 29–30.

The answer, is, as I have demonstrated, audience demands and financial need.

By 1829, then, it is apparent that Landon had become so frustrated with the direction of her career and her relationship with her audience, that disillusion and regret began to creep explicitly into her poetry. Just because Landon invites audiences into her poetry as a creative influence, did not mean that it was an entirely pleasant experience for the writer. Her poetry of pretence allowed her to play and experiment, but still only within boundaries set by market demand. As with Byron's change of tone with *Beppo*, having played her game so long, Landon evidently became embittered with it. As we shall see in her novels, she completely discards pretence, shedding her mask that is so accommodating to her audience's romantic imaginings, in order to reveal more fully facets of Romantic culture.

Conclusion

This chapter has demonstrated that Landon sought to rebel and play within the boundaries set upon her by gendered Romantic literary culture. What many see as restrictions, forcing the poet to repeat endlessly a cycle of poetry that appeals to an audience due to financial need, Landon took as inspiration to solve her financial problems but also to play with and subvert the very conceptions such success was constructed upon. She achieved this via her use of various personae which operated at a level below that which most of her audience detected. These 'lower strata' relied upon and was effectively masked by Landon's use of pretence in her poems, allowing her commercial audience to conflate the poet with her female characters in accordance with their established reading habits. That said, for those observant readers, Landon also offered glimpses into both the ways she played with her audience and potentially subversive ideas, as well as characteristics of what that observant audience was invited to believe as 'reality'. Landon thus negotiated the implications of her popularity and met her financial needs through appeasement of her inherited Byronic audience, whilst also allowing herself creative licence via her subtle deployment of personae, letting her experiment with potentially subversive ideas with her 'observant' audience without jeopardising her sales. This is evident by her longer poems selling in excess of 2,000 copies consistently upon release and sales of her novels performing likewise too.⁵⁷

⁵⁷ For these print figures, see St Clair, *Reading Nation*, pp. 615–616.

Consequently, Landon's poetry is a product of both her understanding and assumptions regarding her audience's desires and reading patterns. Landon has built pre-supposed notions of how her various audiences will read her poetry into her composition. However, evidently this poetry of pretence frustrated the poet and led her to increasingly explicitly adopt subversive personae.⁵⁸ This frustration, bolstered by the confidence gained from an established audience, also led Landon to push against her precursor, Byron, and the ways in which they both had to construct their fame. This increasing disillusion before a change in tactics mirrors Byron's own career leading up to *Beppo*, as we shall see in the succeeding chapter.

⁵⁸ I say she 'increasingly explicitly adopts' these personae as, even as early as *The Improvisatrice*, Landon was deploying them. They simply appeared more explicitly as her career developed, appearing completely unmasked in *Romance And Reality*, as I shall demonstrate. That is not to say that the narrator of *Romance And Reality* represents Landon's 'real' subjectivity, but rather that it explicitly subverted the gendered Romantic notions she had so long laboured under, utilising the personae that had lain largely concealed in her longer poetry which allowed her 'observant audience' to justify their beliefs that these subversive personae were the 'L.E.L.' they believed in all along.

Chapter Nine: Landon's Novels And The Literary Annuals - *Romance and Reality* (1831)

Mid-way through *Romance and Reality* (1831), Landon's narrator recounts a story:

There is a pretty German story of a blind man, who, even under such a misfortune, was happy—happy in a wife whom he passionately loved: her voice was sweet and low, and he gave her credit for that beauty which (he had been a painter) was the object of his idolatry. A physician came, and, curing the disease, restored the husband to light, which he chiefly valued, as it would enable him to gaze on the lovely features of his wife. He looks, and sees a face hideous in ugliness! He is restored to sight, but his happiness is over. Is not this our own history? Our cruel physician is Experience.¹

The tale reflects the comments of *The Athenaeum* which I quoted at the beginning of this Landon case study: were it not for the publication of *Romance and Reality*, 'half of our island might never have awoke from their dream that L.E.L. was an avatar of blue eyes, flaxen ringlets, and a susceptible heart!'² Upon reading *Romance and Reality*, like the blind German, large parts of Landon's audience are suddenly made aware of their own delusions about 'L.E.L.'.

Stephenson regards Landon's turn to the novel in *Romance and Reality* as an attempt to distance herself from her 'poetess' persona as when it appeared, 'it became clear Landon was in the process of constructing quite a different literary self'.³ As I have argued though, this self has been present in Landon's works all along, hidden in the personae she adopts and beneath the veneer of pretence at the heart of her longer poetry. The previous sections have analysed her works through the lens of 'audience romance' against Landon's use of personae which convey the more 'realistic' way women poets, operating in a volatile literary culture, may have often contradictory, subversive, shifting views. This section shall demonstrate that Landon played with a variety of personae in separate poems in the literary annuals of the late Romantic era. Unlike her

¹ Landon, *Romance And Reality*, vol. 2, pp. 46–47.

² 'Review of *Romance and Reality* by L. E. L.' in *The Athenaeum*, quoted in Knowles, 'Celebrity, Femininity and Masquerade', p. 261.

³ Stephenson, *Woman Behind L.E.L.*, p. 39.

longer poems, she did not construct a poetry of pretence which allowed multiple personae to play off against one another. Instead, her poems simply adopt stances, from the Wordsworthian to the Byronic for example, in order to offer the variety literary annuals required and to 'try on for size' styles.

I shall additionally argue that she shifts her relationship with her audience in her novels too. Stepping from behind the pretence at the heart of her longer poetry, Landon's narrator adopts a persona that appears to be more revelatory of the actual woman behind the works.⁴ Her narrator explicitly discusses potential aspects of the female writer's experience and opinions in a way that none of her previous texts have. These opinions mirror those shown by the critical personae she employs behind her poetry of pretence (who cast that 'sidelong glance' Cronin identifies), but they are now no longer masked by the ideals of femininity that her female characters represented. Instead, her narrator represents a blunt persona which directly addresses her readers with judgments based loosely on Landon's reality including her attitudes towards high society and the environment of publishing for female authors. In this sense, Landon was no longer writing to appease the majority of her audience through idealised images of femininity, but challenging them by directly confronting them with a persona that was more commanding and critical in opinion. As I shall demonstrate, this change invokes a shift in the writer-audience relationship to one whereby her readers bought her novels in search of the 'actual' views of this 'new' Landon who had revealed herself, and not the 'flaxen-haired avatar' of their own ideals.⁵ I shall also demonstrate how this newfound desire runs parallel to the emergent popularity of the silver-fork novel.

Finally, I shall explore Landon's engagement with Wordsworth's ideas when she sought to construct a potential alternative viewpoint on literature, posterity, and the role of the marketplace, which arose from her own experiences of literary culture. As I

⁴ I am not suggesting that this persona is an accurate representation of Landon herself, but rather that it makes readers believe it is by being more revelatory and speaking in a manner that evokes candidness. In such a precarious environment, especially for female writers (as I have discussed), it would likely have opened Landon up to risk to truly reveal herself in her texts rather than sculpting her image according to audience expectations or desires.

⁵ I use the term 'actual' loosely as, again, it is impossible to say whether the narrator of *Romance And Reality* did represent Landon's views or was, as I believe, constructed as an avatar to guide audience perceptions of herself and her works, thus fuelling her sales. Ultimately, whether any of the personae that Landon employs throughout her career represent her real self is unimportant to this study as they are, as I argue, the product of the shifting interchange of influences in the late Romantic print market.

have argued with Byron and Scott, all three writers found Wordsworth's views on writing for posterity problematic due to their embrace of the market, the celebrity such audience engagement provided them, and how this may affect their posthumous reputation.

Landon And The Annuals

In order to understand the ways Landon utilised the 'literary annual' as a vehicle for play with her audience, we must first understand the role of such a format. David Stewart provides an important corrective to the traditional view that there was a collapse in the market for poetry in the 1820s by highlighting that the annuals were one of many successful ventures in this period that helped maintain a substantial audience for poetry.⁶ Rather than a collapse in the market, poetry was simply demanded in different formats. Pioneered by German entrepreneur Rudolph Ackermann with the 1823 edition of *Forget Me Not*, literary annuals reached a peak in 1828 when 15 separate annuals sold a combined 100,000 copies, generating over £70,000 worth of profit for their manufacturers, with the notable leaders being *Forget Me Not*, *The Literary Souvenir*, *Friendship's Offering*, and *The Keepsake*.⁷ Indeed, *The Keepsake* alone sold between 12,000 and 15,000 copies in 1828, and 20,000 copies in one month alone during 1829, in a market of 43 separate annual titles in Britain.⁸ Often appearing around Christmas, annuals were intended to be presents, hence names like *Forget Me Not*.⁹ They were also elaborately decorated: *The Keepsake* was clothed in shimmering red silk, the same material as women's clothing; *Fisher's Drawing Room Scrapbook* was printed in folio, bound in chestnut leather with a blue spine. The annuals were marketed as prestige pieces to be positioned on household tables indicating the status of families who could afford them.¹⁰ Most contained engravings with poems to accompany them.¹¹ Often

⁶ David Stewart, *The Form of Poetry in the 1820s and 1830s: A Period of Doubt*, (Basingstoke; Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), p. 65.

⁷ Katherine D. Harris, *Forget Me Not: The Rise of the British Literary Annual, 1823-1835*, (Athens, OH; Ohio University Press, 2015), p. 3.

⁸ See Stewart, *The Form of Poetry*, p. 73.

⁹ However, Paula Feldman's research shows that annuals were frequently bought by both men and women for private consumption too, as well as a status symbol. See Paula R. Feldman, 'Women, Literary Annuals, and the Evidence of Inscriptions' in *Keats-Shelley Journal*, Vol. 55, (2006), pp. 54–62.

¹⁰ For a detailed description of *Fisher's Drawing Room Scrapbook* and its place as a symbol of middle-class aspiration, see Stewart, *The Form of Poetry*, pp. 68–69.

¹¹ The annuals also included short stories, literary sketches, and other contributions. Landon wrote in a variety of formats for the annuals, though my focus will be solely on her poetry in this section.

aimed at middle-class women, they were aggressively marketed to profit from the aspirations of the middle-class to bridge the social gap to the aristocracy.¹²

The Keepsake was notable among annuals for its pursuit of celebrity contributions. Coleridge, for instance, was offered £50 for eleven pages of work to the 1829 *Keepsake*.¹³ It purportedly paid Scott four hundred guineas for one short story, and Coleridge commented that the above offer was ‘more than all, I ever made by all my Publications’.¹⁴ Often this brought radical poets into the fold with conservatives, with Mary and Percy Shelley appearing in the same volumes as Wordsworth and Southey. Politics mattered little; what mattered was the demand attracted by such names.¹⁵ Indeed, Landon was the most prolific contributor to the annuals with 163 entries, some of which were published in more than one annual.¹⁶ This is no surprise as she was editor of a number of them, including *The Easter Gift* (1832), *Heath’s Book Of Beauty* (1833), *A Birthday Tribute* (1837), *Flowers Of Loveliness* (1838), and *Fisher’s Drawing Room Scrapbook* (1832–9).¹⁷ Her contributions to the *Fisher’s Drawing Room Scrapbooks*, when compiled, earned her around £105 per annual, making them attractive financially.¹⁸ This brought Landon to a greater audience than her poetry volumes had, with *The Athenaeum* commenting that ‘On the wings of these painted hummingbirds the fame of the poet and that of the painter was wafted faster and farther than it could have been through the ordinary channels of publications’.¹⁹ Katherine Harris proposes that the annuals, marketed at women, were intended to encourage an idealised version of femininity through their imagery and poetry, although female contributors often used

¹² Not all literary annuals were specifically targeted at female readers though, with such instances as *A Father’s Present To His Son*, or the *Young Gentleman’s Annual*. Feldman estimates that ‘73 percent were owned by females and a surprisingly high 27 percent were owned by males’, for instance. See Harris, p. 3; and Feldman, p. 57.

¹³ Coleridge’s contract stipulated that he would be paid such an amount so long as he would contribute to no other annual other than the *Literary Souvenir*, with which he already had a prior agreement that year. See Peter J. Manning, ‘Wordsworth And *The Keepsake*’ in *Literature in the Marketplace: Nineteenth-Century British Publishing & Reading Practices*, ed. John O. Jordan and Robert L. Patten, (Cambridge; Cambridge University Press, 2003), p. 52

¹⁴ Leighton, p. 49.

¹⁵ For radical and conservative poets being published within the same annuals, see Manning, ‘Wordsworth And *The Keepsake*’, pp. 55–56.

¹⁶ For a list of Landon’s annual poems and in which annual they were respectively published in, see Harris, pp. 300–305.

¹⁷ Stephenson, *Woman Behind L.E.L.*, pp. 133–134.

¹⁸ Watt, p. 96.

¹⁹ Sara Lodge highlights that such literary annuals actually elevated the works of lesser read poets like Wordsworth to audiences larger than their own volumes of poetry. See Sara Lodge, ‘Romantic Reliquaries: Memory and Irony in The Literary Annuals’ in *Romanticism*, Volume 10, Number 1, (2004), pp. 23–40; and *The Athenaeum* is quoted in in Stephenson, *Woman Behind L.E.L.*, pp. 126–127.

the format to subvert and play with those conceptions. This increased when women more commonly adopted editorship of them in the 1830s, ‘coincidentally’ when the annuals gained in popularity.²⁰ As we shall see, such an opportunity sits comfortably within Landon’s career.

Landon’s editorships and contributions did not pass without negative publicity. Scorning Landon’s involvement with *Fisher’s Drawing Room Scrapbook*, William Thackeray remarked that:

In the work called *Fisher’s Scrap-Book*.... Miss Landon has performed a miracle—it may be ‘a miracle instead of wit’; but it is a perfect wonder how any lady could have penned such a number of verses upon all sorts of subjects, and upon subjects, perhaps, on which, in former volumes of this *Scrap-Book*, she has poetised half-a-dozen times before. She will pardon us for asking, if she does justice to her great talent by employing it in this way? It is the gift of God to her—to watch, to cherish, and to improve: it was not given to her to be made over to the highest bidder, or to be pawned for so many pounds per sheet. An inferior talent (like that of many of whom we have been speaking) must sell itself to live—a genius has higher duties; and Miss Landon degrades hers, by producing what is even indifferent.²¹

According to Thackeray, Landon was debasing herself by contributing to the annuals. The comment highlights the crucial aspect of Landon’s involvement that Thackeray has overlooked, and perhaps the reason why, despite his scorn, he contributed to the annuals himself: financial gain.

The format of writing poetry to accompany engravings or to construct an idealised femininity would seem to be a restrictive practice. For many contributors, it may

²⁰ Ledbetter shows that, despite their editorship, due to their roles in the Romantic literary world and cultural expectations of femininity, women editors and contributors could not afford to be dismissive of or bullish in relation to the male publishers and printers of annuals. Indeed, kept out of the loop on the success of *Heath’s Book of Beauty*, Lady Blessington did not realise she was in any financial hazard until after Heath’s death in 1848, when she discovered she was in debt for £700. See Kathryn Ledbetter, ‘Lucrative Requests: British Authors and Gift Book Editors’ in *The Papers of the Bibliographical Society of America*, Vol. 88, Number 2, (June 1994), pp. 213–214; and Harris, pp. 207–216 (p. 251).

²¹ See William Thackeray, ‘A Word On The Annuals’ in *Fraser’s Magazine*, (December 1837), pp. 758–762, quoted in Stephenson, *Woman Behind L.E.L.*, p. 148.

have been.²² Indeed, writing to the middle-class annual audience's desire to aspire towards the aristocracy, Landon composed such poems as 'Lines on the Mausoleum of the Princess Charlotte at Claremont' for the 1824 edition of *Forget Me Not* which ac-



Figure 1: E.F. Burney, A Pugin, & C. Moore, 'Mausoleum of Princess Charlotte: Exterior' in *Forget Me Not* (1824)—courtesy of *Wikimedia Commons*
<https://commons.wikimedia.org> [accessed 28/04/19]

companied this print of the young Princess's mausoleum.²³ In her insightful reading, Lodge states that the poem 'cleverly allow[s] the reader both to inhabit imaginatively the architectural space occupied by the aristocracy, and also to share the cultural space of mourning Charlotte's death. As memory implies knowledge, loss ironically becomes a means of appropriation.'²⁴ Most of Landon's poetry followed this format: allowing her middle-class audience to aspire to the aristocracy, portraying a tender image of femininity, and often accompanying a print. However, rather than being restrictive, for Landon, the annual format was actually empowering. As the previous chapter highlighted,

²² Wordsworth's daughter, Dora, for instance, described the conflict the poet experienced in submitting to the annuals: 'Father could not feel himself justified in refusing so advantageous an offer—degrading enough I confess but necessity has no law, and galling enough but we must pocket our pride sometimes and it is good for us.' Quoted in Manning, 'Wordsworth And *The Keepsake*', p. 50.

²³ See Letitia Elizabeth Landon, 'Lines on the Mausoleum of the Princess Charlotte at Claremont' in *Forget Me Not: A Christmas and New Year's Present for 1824*, (London; R. Ackerman, 1824), pp. 36–37 in *Nineteenth Century Collections Online* <<http://gdc.gale-group.com/gdc/ncco/>> [accessed 28/04/19].

²⁴ Lodge, p. 27.

Cope's point that Landon's annual poetry has no subjective centre or that she is a 'faceless shuffler and artificer of doctrines' is most relevant here.²⁵ It is perhaps in the annuals that we see Landon's mobile personae at their most fluid, enabled by the format.

Harris states that 'male editors, authors, and publishers presented readers with an idealised femininity that approximated the propriety, education, and social instruction offered by earlier and more narrowly didactic conduct manuals'.²⁶ She labels such a presentation as 'patriarchal femininity' which is 'predicated on defining woman and [the] feminine as passive, uneducated, domestic, impotent, or simple'.²⁷ Additionally, Lodge highlights that annuals often contained poems in memory of deceased authors in order to engage readers by citing texts they are already likely to have appreciated. However, their 'homage to specific writers is also laced with riposte: the annuals offer multifarious opportunities to editors, contributors, and readers to respond ambivalently to the work of more famous figures within their pages'.²⁸ As we have seen with Craciun's readings of 'Experiments, Or The Lover Of Ennui' or 'The Enchantress' in *Heath's Book Of Beauty* (1833), Landon simultaneously does both. She represents women who do not conform to Romantic ideals of femininity and who ultimately triumph over man, in this case Byron. In this instance, Landon takes up a persona who mocks the precursor she owes much of her poetic legacy to, but also promotes a subversive form of proto-feminism of which her annuals' largely female readership would likely have appreciated.²⁹

²⁵ Cope, p. 378.

²⁶ Harris, p. 4.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 234.

²⁸ Lodge, pp. 24–25.

²⁹ Jacqueline Pearson argues that women, when reading female-authored works, take up two positions in their minds when writing poetry: both the subject and object positions. This allows them to fully sympathise with both female character and female author. Additionally, she contends that women 'liked to read what women had written'. See Jacqueline Pearson, 'Women Reading, Reading Women' in *Women and Literature in Britain, 1500–1700*, ed. Helen Wilcox, (Cambridge; Cambridge University Press, 1996), pp. 80–99; and Jacqueline Pearson, *Women's Reading in Britain, 1750–1835: A Dangerous Recreation*, (Cambridge; Cambridge University Press, 2009), p. 97.

Furthermore, rather than adhering to the conventional writing practice of a poem that describes the accompanying print, Landon passes comment on that very compositional process in such poems as ‘Macao’ and ‘The Chinese Pagoda—Between Canton and Whampoa’ in *Fisher’s Drawing Room Scrapbook* to mock herself, the format, and its demands upon authors. In ‘Macao’ for example, accompanying this print of ware-



Figure 2: W. Harwood, ‘Macao, China’ in *Fisher’s Drawing Room Scrapbook* (1833)—courtesy of *Wikimedia Commons* <<https://commons.wikimedia.org>> [accessed 28/04/19]

houses in the port, Landon opens by asking ‘Good Heaven! whatever shall I do?/ I must write something for my readers: / What has become of my ideas? / Now, out upon them for seceders!’³⁰ Rather than description, Landon mockingly removes herself from the role *Fisher’s* would have her perform, undercutting the presence of the print, to question the very difficulties of a poet in writing on such a bland topic. Again, we see Landon removing herself from the conventional poet–audience relationship to offer a sidelong glance at the reader questioning the poetic practice itself. She then later goes on to comment ‘The wish however’s served for rhyme, / But here again invention falters: / Had it but been a town in Greece; / I might have raved about its altars’, undermining audience conceptions that female poetry must be extempore, as well as the foundations of her former poetry: exotic descriptions centred around the antiquarian East.³¹ By removing herself from the conventional role of descriptive poetry then, Landon is able to rely on her audience’s knowledge of her former works to both mock them and the format of the annuals, eventually ‘giv[ing] it up in pure despair’.³²

³⁰ Letitia Elizabeth Landon, ‘Macao’ in *Fisher’s Drawing Room Scrapbook*, (London; Fisher, Son, And Company, 1833), p. 42 in *Hathi Trust Digital Library* <<https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/>> [accessed 28/04/19].

³¹ *Ibid.*

³² *Ibid.*

This is reflected in the ‘Chinese Pagoda’ which was accompanied by the print below when Landon, again, highlights the absurdities of her position of having to write a poem to accompany an uninspiring picture:

I sent to Messrs. Fisher, saying
The simple fact—I could not write;
What was the use of my inveighing?—
Back came the fatal scroll that night.

“But, madam, such a fine engraving,
The country, too, so little known!”
One’s publisher there is no braving—
The plate was work’d, “the dye was thrown.”³³

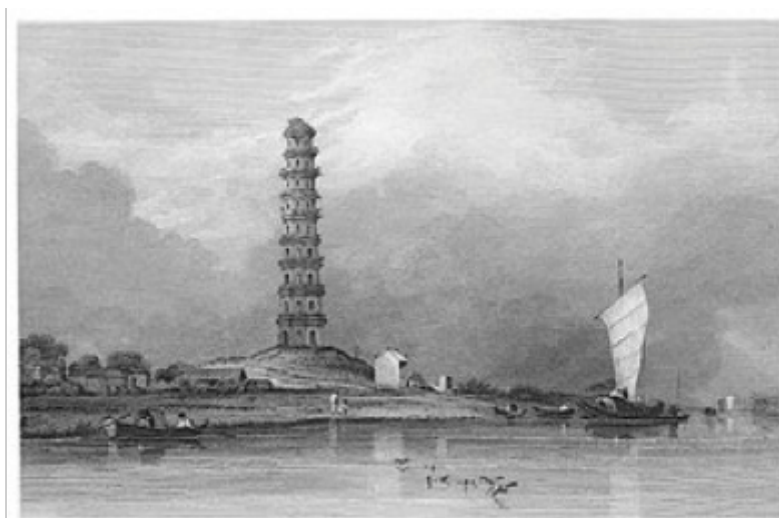


Figure 3: J. Copley Fielding, ‘Chinese Pagoda—Between Canton and Whampoa’ in *Fisher’s Drawing Room Scrapbook* (1833)—courtesy of *Wikimedia Commons* <<https://commons.wikimedia.org>> [accessed 28/04/19]

Again, she removes herself from the conventional annual-poet role in order to critique that role and its demands. Despite her difficulties, her publisher insists she fulfil the role. The poem, then, exists as a narrative of its difficult composition, undermining her audience’s romantic notions of extempore female poetry and wittily presenting the ‘reality’ Landon must face as a poor female poet.

³³ Letitia Elizabeth Landon, ‘The Chinese Pagoda’ in *Ibid.*, p. 49.

Such poems, thus, display Landon's use of various personae throughout her annual contributions. Rather than being pressured into the conventional audience–poet relationship the format of annuals dictates, Landon employed personae to construct satire about her very compositional methods, propose new forms of femininity, and challenge her readers' 'Byronic' methods of reading her works. Of course, being editor of both the above annuals at the time helps. Thackeray's comments are once again indicative of late-Romantic culture's conceptions being pushed onto Landon, but rather than being restricted by them into a conventional role, Landon creates from and plays with them. Thackeray's statements thus care little for Landon not doing justice to her talents, but more so for the ways in which she subverts imposed roles and conceptions so explicitly in the annuals. Having taken into account the demands annual writing imposes upon her, audience expectations, as well as her largely middle-class female audience's desires, Landon thus employs multiple personae in order to offer her readers variety as well as to playfully challenge their perceptions. The annuals then (and her editorial position), actually allowed Landon creative freedom to engage with her audience in searching and playful ways.

Romance and Reality

Edward Copeland identifies that the silver-fork phenomenon flourished in the 1820s and '30s, and that the novels were obsessed with 'surfaces, of print culture, advertisements and fashion as ways of knowing', in part as they arose at a period when readers had more complete access to images due to technological advancements.³⁴ Again, like annuals, silver fork novels were marketed aggressively to an emergent middle class's aspiration to emulate the aristocracy, with Henry Colburn, the most prolific of their publishers, advertising publications on the basis that they offered readers glimpses into the upper-class world by authors with apparent access to that world.³⁵ However, as Simon During astutely highlights, the novels specialised 'in representations of society for a middle-class readership' as their authors often enough had relatively limited access to

³⁴ Edward Copeland, *The Silver Fork Novel: Fashionable Fiction in the Age of Reform*, (Cambridge; Cambridge University Press, 2012), p. 4.

³⁵ Copeland also describes how Landon's publisher for *Romance And Reality*, Henry Colburn, developed an outrageous reputation in part from his framing of advertisements for his novels that were published in newspapers to blend in with and disguise themselves as actual news stories. See Copeland, p. 16.

such circles, despite their claims.³⁶ Whilst scholars initially neglected silver fork novels, there has been a recent upsurge in interest in them, revealing that their access falls further down the social ladder than previously imagined due to circulating libraries. Barbara Benedict highlights that the shallow writing in the novels, their blunt titles, and similar plots and themes, were produced in alignment with the borrowing policies of circulating libraries that often demanded their texts back quickly.³⁷ This explains why the novels were often split into three volumes of around 300 pages in length, with plot hooks at the end of each volume, and intertextual allusions to other novels in order to encourage return readers and to allow them to believe themselves as ‘taking part in a shared fictional conversation’ that was easily accessible.³⁸

Landon, always alert to the literary market, published at least three novels during the 1830s, but only one new volume of poems, *The Vow Of The Peacock* (1835). Between 1831 and 1838 she produced *Romance and Reality* (1831), *Francesca Carrara* (1834), and *Ethel Churchill* (1837) and a book of children’s tales entitled *Traits And Trials Of Early Life* (1836). Whilst *Francesca Carrara* was a historical novel, the other two can be described as ‘silver fork novels’. All of them, except *Francesca Carrara*, were published by Henry Colburn. It was natural that a writer in need of financial security should take up the genre, but Julie Watt suggests that it was perhaps also Landon’s fatigue with being connected to her characters that led her towards such a move.³⁹ With such potential for profit, emphasis on surfaces, and quick reading practices by their audience, it was no wonder that Landon, having written poetry that depended upon the majority of her readers overlooking meaning deeper than their own desires, found such a format an appealing opportunity to play. *Romance and Reality*, as a title itself, indeed exploits such emphasis on surface images, as we shall see.

Discussing novels and their rise in the early nineteenth century, Edward Lorraine, the love interest of Landon’s protagonist Emily in *Romance and Reality*, declares that ‘I think these works go very far to support our theory of the novel that it is like the Roman Empire, sweeping all under its dominion’.⁴⁰ Landon’s switch to novel writing in

³⁶ Indeed, Landon herself, as a middle-class professional author, had limited access to this aristocratic world, for instance. See Simon During, ‘Regency London’, in *The Cambridge History of English Romantic Literature*, ed. James Chandler, (Cambridge; Cambridge University Press, 2009), p. 335.

³⁷ Indeed, in a lot of cases, circulating libraries demanded their members return a text within a week of its borrowing. See Benedict, pp. 63–86.

³⁸ See Copeland, p. 25.

³⁹ See Watt, pp. 68–91.

⁴⁰ Landon, *Romance And Reality*, vol. 1, p. 199.

1831 was not solely a switch in genre brought about by changing trends in the literary market; it also represented Landon altering the relationship between herself and audience from one based on audience fantasy, desire, and gendered conceptions, to one more reminiscent of celebrity biography, revealing the aristocratic world such silver-fork readers desired.

Perhaps the first example of this is Lady Caroline Lamb's *Glenarvon* (1816), the thinly veiled account of Byron's life by his former lover.⁴¹ As Clara Tuite suggests, 'for many readers, *Glenarvon* served as a source of information about Byron's private life at a time when such details were highly sought after but not yet widely available in the public sphere'.⁴² Although very few readers knew Byron personally, many supposed that his poems offered an unmediated glimpse into his life. *Glenarvon* no doubt fed upon this, providing Lamb's audience with the information on Byron they desired, which bolstered their interpretations of his works.

Claire Knowles contrasts *Glenarvon* with *Romance and Reality*, arguing that Landon's novel follows Lamb's model. When it was published, Landon was at the height of her fame. The novel feeds on Landon's celebrity status by offering her audience an apparently unmediated glimpse into their admired celebrity's 'real' viewpoints. This mirrors the *Westminster Review*'s analysis:

The chapters should run thus: L. E. L. descriptive; L. E. L. brilliant; L. E. L. sentimental; L. E. L. and her friends; L. E. L. very sage; L. E. L. fashionable &c. &c. &c.; the fact being, that the whole work is an elaborate "Thinks I to myself," or "What will they say of me."⁴³

The conversational narrator, and her various observational asides, adds to this impression that Landon is, unlike in her poems, addressing the audience without a middle

⁴¹ Most critics tend to pinpoint the surge in silver-fork novels to the mid-1820s, but *Glenarvon* is one prominent precursor from the Regency decade that shaped the audience Landon would inherit.

⁴² Claire Knowles, quoting this statement by Tuite in her analysis of *Romance And Reality*, also states that *Glenarvon* 'not only gave its readers an insight into life in the privileged aristocratic circles within which Lamb herself moved, but it was also read by readers as something like an unauthorised Byron biography'. See Claire Knowles, 'Celebrity, Femininity and Masquerade', p. 254; and Clara Tuite, 'Tainted Love and Romantic "Literary Celebrity"' in *ELH*, Vol. 74, Number 1, (Spring 2007), pp. 59–88 (p. 72).

⁴³ 'Review of *Romance and Reality* by L. E. L.' in *The Westminster Review*, Vol. 16, Issue 31, (January-April 1832), p. 205, quoted in Knowles, 'Celebrity, Femininity and Masquerade', p. 256.

agent such as her female characters or through a third figure. Such cutting asides as ‘comparing society “to a honey-comb, sweet but hollow”’, allow Landon’s middle-class audience to peel back the hidden depths of aristocratic society and be savvy to Landon’s apparently private, ‘authentic’ views on the realm she is a part of.⁴⁴ Whilst the unfortunate lack of private correspondence or a journal cannot confirm such suspicions (as one can with Byron and Scott), third person encounters with Landon by others would suggest that the narrator of *Romance and Reality* is indeed the persona which most closely resembles an ‘authentic’ Landon, or at least glimpses into the pressures and influences present upon her. As Knowles states, ‘Part of the allure of Landon’s novel, then, is the opportunity it allows for the reader to imagine him or herself as an attendee at one of Landon’s famous soirees, rubbing shoulders with the wealthy and witty inhabitants of London literary society, and gaining an audience with the famous L. E. L.’⁴⁵

As *The Athenaeum*’s review shows, this new narrator of *Romance and Reality* shocked reviewers.⁴⁶ However, with the hindsight of studying Landon’s texts as a fully published body of work, we are able to see that the witty Landon of her novels was actually present within all of her poems, albeit masked by her artificial style which encouraged audience speculation about ‘L.E.L.’ figured on their own conceptions of gender and fantasies. Landon’s critical personae, hidden by both her characters and her audience’s conflated ‘L.E.L.’, can be seen as fully emerging with *Romance and Reality*, altering the relationship with her audience from one of ‘romantic’ imaginative engagement (on her audience’s part) to supposed voyeurism into Landon’s ‘reality’. Whilst it may have initially been a desire to reinforce their conceptions about their imagined ‘L.E.L.’ that led her audience to the novel, it is this ‘new’ Landon that comes to hold such fascination for her audience, and that shocks them once she breaks her own constructed spell over them.

Encounters with Landon equally shocked those who had constructed their own images of ‘L.E.L.’ too, with Landon recounting that ‘One young lady heard at Scarborough last summer, that I had two-hundred offers; and a gentleman from Leeds brought an account of three-hundred and fifty straight from London. It is really very unfortunate that my conquest should so much resemble the passage to the North Pole and

⁴⁴ Landon, *Romance And Reality*, vol. 1, p. 142.

⁴⁵ Knowles, ‘Celebrity, Femininity and Masquerade’, p. 257.

⁴⁶ See ‘Review of *Romance and Reality* by L. E. L.’ in *The Athenaeum*, quoted in *Ibid.*, p. 261.

Wordsworth's Cuckoo, "talked of but never seen".⁴⁷ Just as the reviewer of *The Athenaeum* was shocked to conclude that Landon was not the 'L.E.L.' of their mind's construction, so too were those who met her.⁴⁸ The response to *Romance and Reality* ignited similar surprise as it tends to debunk, and even ridicule, the ways her former works functioned whilst offering an insight into how women had to adapt and perform in order to fit into Romantic-period society, especially Landon herself. Indeed, the novel, with its title that sets out the diametrically opposed 'romance' and 'reality', functions again as a warning upon audience-constructed romance. In the middle of volume one, Landon warns her reader that 'Motives are like harlequins—there is always a second dress beneath the first'.⁴⁹ The phrase can equally be applied to Landon's poems and her motives: beneath the veneer of the Burkean feminine, lies the analytical Landon of the very novel they are reading, and this is a similar tension at the heart of her novel. Indeed, unlike her previous works, the novel explicitly and pointedly offers to readers the hint that such a two-level reading is necessary, even forcing them to rethink their readings of her previous poems. Landon invites her readers to view the creation of the text, stripping away as she does so any lingering illusions about unmediated emotional 'expression' on the writer's part.

The plot of *Romance and Reality* follows Emily and her doomed infatuation with Edward Lorraine. Following on from such a tradition set by Charlotte Lennox's *The Female Quixote; Or, The Adventures Of Arabella* (1752) or Scott's *Waverley*, Emily is described as romantic due to her reading habits, with her believing London 'as much an El Dorado as novels and novelty could make it', something she would learn to redress when she had seen the reality.⁵⁰ Knowles states that '[f]rom relatively early in the novel, we see that women must learn to negotiate societal regulation in much the

⁴⁷ Quoted in Watt, p. 54.

⁴⁸ Stephenson, for instance, quotes an anecdote by William Howitt on Landon's presence at a dinner party: 'witty and conversant as she was, you had the feeling she was playing an assumed part. Her manner and conversation were not only the very reverse of the tone and sentiment of her poems, but she seemed to say things for the sake of astonishing you with the very contrast'. Howitt, apparently, told of 'a conversation between Landon and a young man who asked her what she had been doing during the previous months. "Oh, I have been puzzling my brain to invent a new sleeve; pray how do you like it?" replied Landon. "You never think such a thing as love", ask the disappointed young man, "you who have written so many volumes of poetry upon it?" "Oh! that is all professional, you know!" Landon exclaimed with "an air of merry scorn". Of course, much like Byron's eccentric acting in Regency society, this, too, could have been an act or it could have been Landon's authentic persona: such is the relationship of 'celebrity'. See Stephenson, *Woman Behind L.E.L.*, p. 7.

⁴⁹ Landon, *Romance And Reality*, vol. 1, p. 247.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 17.

same way as they must learn the most fashionable dances if they are to present themselves as attractive partners in life and on the dance floor'.⁵¹ Just as 'It is a fact, as melancholy for the historian as it is true, that though balls are very important events in a young lady's career, there is exceedingly little to be said about them:—they are pleasures all on the same pattern,—the history of one is the history of all', ladies must endure the repetitive artificiality of balls in order to negotiate Romantic-period society.⁵² Commenting on the contingency of theatricality in the novel, Knowles highlights that Emily's performance is so impressive that she is described as 'the charm of the piece. Her vivacity appeared as graceful as it was buoyant; her gay spirit seemed the musical overflowings of youth and happiness; her eye and cheek brightened together; and her sweet glad laugh was as catching as yawning'.⁵³ This is despite being suicidal over Edward's neglect, leading her to overshadow even her mentor, 'Madame de Ligne, who, having always looked upon Emily as a pretty painting, had only expected her to make a good side scene, and was more surprised than pleased by a display that cast herself quite into the back ground'.⁵⁴ As Landon states, society, like Emily's performance, is indeed like a honeycomb, sweet on appearance but hollow due to its artificiality. Ultimately, despite her conformity, Emily does not win Edward's affections with him instead falling for the Spaniard Beatrice. The plot reverses those of most of Landon's former pieces, whereby the naturally passionate woman is neglected by man in favour of those women who conform to Burkean representations of the delicate, subservient female: the Improvisatrice is loved by Lorenzo, for instance, only when she is subservient and lacking passion.⁵⁵ *Romance and Reality* thus undermines the premise of Landon's poetry, revealing the absurdity and futility of such gendered conceptions as well as women's need to adhere to them. It also points out that it was Emily's over-romanticising of reality, based on her romantic reading habits, that ultimately led to her death despite her conformity to society's demands.

Where Landon may declare 'if it were not for romance, reality would be unbearable' she also cautions that 'nevertheless they are very different things'.⁵⁶ Just as Lan-

⁵¹ Knowles, 'Celebrity, Femininity and Masquerade', p. 252.

⁵² Landon, *Romance And Reality*, vol. 1, p. 221.

⁵³ Knowles, 'Celebrity, Femininity and Masquerade', p. 259; and Landon, *Romance And Reality*, vol. 3, p. 189.

⁵⁴ Landon, *Romance And Reality*, vol. 3, p. 189.

⁵⁵ Beatrice is, unlike Emily, a character who does not necessarily conform to society's gendered conceptions of the feminine, but is indeed passionate and full of fire.

⁵⁶ Landon, *Romance And Reality*, vol. 3, p. 155.

don's fame was built upon the ritual performance of her audience's gendered conceptions, Emily's acceptance into Romantic-period society was too. However, both masquerades can evidently be detrimental to personal happiness, as displayed by Emily's fate and Landon's later frustrations with her position. By exploring the disjunction between masks and reality, Landon is passing comment on the often unacknowledged tension that exists within all of her former works: between that of the audience-constructed, romantic 'L.E.L.' (conflated with her characters), and her use of personae which communicate more realistically the pressures and experimental viewpoints of a woman buffeted by Romantic literary culture. Just as Emily over-romanticises her relationship with Edward, leading to her death, such over-romanticising on the part of Landon's audience ultimately also leads to disillusion when they realise Landon is not the 'L.E.L.' of their fantasising. Landon thus uses the hollow nature of society as well as her experiences of Romantic reading practices to construct a narrative that demonstrates the flaws of each, thus embracing the 'touch' of her audience and highlighting its faults, in order to 'soften' that audience. Landon's ultimate irony in demonstrating the hollowness of Romantic culture and a reading style that relies entirely on surfaces, comes in that she offers such a commentary in a genre that was dependent on surfaces and appearance for its success, the silver-fork novel, a form that Copeland argues relies on quick readers, taking surfaces at face value.⁵⁷ Landon's works then, play upon surfaces and readerly conceptions often to critique through irony the pitfalls of such conceptions and audience-driven reading practices. With hindsight, we have seen the playfulness of Landon by looking at her works in reverse from the revelatory *Romance and Reality*. This would not have been a privilege her Romantic-period audience had. Just as the majority of Landon's audience may accept the performance in front of them, like Emily's in front of Madame de Ligne, they remained unaware of the reality below the surface, at least until they read *Romance and Reality*. The novel, then, much as Knowles argues about Landon's longer poems, acts again as a warning to her audience to keep in mind enough 'reality to ballast romance'.⁵⁸ It invites us to recognise that all of her works depend on, and indeed are created by, a delicate, complex interchange of 'touches' that took place in the performance space of the Romantic-period print market. Landon's texts, then, actively invite the 'touch' of other parties (like her various audiences) in or-

⁵⁷ See Copeland, pp. 4–5.

⁵⁸ See Knowles, 'Celebrity, Femininity and Masquerade', p. 261; and Landon, *Romance And Reality*, vol. 3, p. 197.

der to produce texts that are poly-vocal in that they are the results of negotiations between Landon's understanding of the multiple desires and intentions of audiences, direct interventions by editors, and Landon's own creativity.

Landon And Wordsworth

In *Romance and Reality*, Landon discusses Wordsworth, a poet whose ideology fascinated her throughout her career, describing him as:

the most poetical of philosophers. Strange, that a man can be so great a poet, and yet deficient in what are poetry's two grand requisites,—imagination and passion. He describes what he has seen, and beautifully, because he is impressed with the beauty before his eyes. He creates nothing: I cannot recall one fine simile. He has often expressions of touching feeling—he is often melancholy, often tender—but with more of sympathy than energy; and for simplicity he often mistakes both vulgarity and silliness. He never fills the atmosphere around with music, 'lapping us in Elysium,' like Moore: he never makes his readers fairly forget their very identity, in the intense interest of the narrative, like Scott: he never startles us with the depth of our secret thoughts—he never brings to our remembrance all that our own existence has had of poetry or passion—the earnestness of early hope, the bitterness of after-disappointment—like Byron. But he sits by the fireside or wanders through the fields, and calls from their daily affections and sympathies foundations whereon to erect a scheme of the widest benevolence. He looks forth on the beautiful scenery amid which he has dwelt, and links with it a thousand ties of the human loveliness of thought: I would say, his excellence is the moral sublime.⁵⁹

The description is both flattering and critical. If we measure Landon's praise by the qualities Wordsworth celebrates in his preface to the *Lyrical Ballads*, then her claims that he portrays exactly 'the beauty before his eyes' through expressions of 'touching' or 'tender' feeling, then Wordsworth would indeed be pleased.⁶⁰ However, when she

⁵⁹ Landon, *Romance And Reality*, vol. 2, pp. 118–119.

⁶⁰ See, for instance, Wordsworth's claims outlined in the Preface to the *Lyrical Ballads* (1800) that 'all good poetry is the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings' by writers who are 'pos-

sets him in terms compared to Byron, Scott, and Moore, poets like herself who actively engage their contemporary audience, Wordsworth begins to appear lacking. He ‘never startles us with the depth of our secret thoughts’ and ‘never brings to our remembrance all that our own existence has had of poetry or passion’, highlighting the crucial difference between them and Wordsworth: audience and market engagement. Even the invocation of ‘music’ in the ‘atmosphere’ highlights the lack of an audience to hear Wordsworth. In a letter to John Wilson in 1802, Wordsworth lectured that ‘gentlemen, persons of fortune, professional men, ladies persons who can afford to buy or can easily procure books of half a guinea price, hot-pressed, and printed upon superfine paper’ were corrupt judges of ‘human nature’ and hence of poetry, displaying his disdain of most Romantic readers and, as the references to papers and pricing suggest, the print market itself.⁶¹ Thus, whilst Landon shows her appreciation of such Wordsworthian high-mindedness, her praise of Byron, Scott and Moore (all best-sellers) suggests her affinity with another mode of Romantic poetry, one that actively engaged with (and reaped the creative benefits of) the period’s literary marketplace.

As I have argued, Landon’s subjectivity and viewpoints are incredibly difficult to pinpoint, often obscured by her use of pretence. This is bolstered by such poems as ‘Glengariffe’ (1832), or ‘On Wordsworth’s Cottage, Near Grasmere Lake’ (1838) in *Fisher’s Drawing Room Scrapbook*, where Landon praises the poet and actively emulates the Wordsworthian style. As Cope states, Landon has ‘perfected the art of literary impersonation’, whether that be with Byron or Wordsworth.⁶² But it is evident that she disagreed with his notions of contemporary fame and his subsequent views on posterity. In her essay ‘On the Ancient and Modern Influence of Poetry’ (1832), Landon remarks that ‘writers do not set their own mark on their property: one might have put forth the work of the other, or it might be that of their predecessors.’ Whilst she praises the ‘actual and benevolent philosophy of Wordsworth’, such a statement disagrees with his ideology that poetry without contemporary acclaim will receive popularity in posterity.⁶³ In ‘Lines Of Life’ (1829), Landon seems to display that she would like to be remembered posthumously with such lines as ‘I gaze upon the thousand stars / That fill

essed of more than usual organic sensibility’ and that ‘it takes its origin from emotion recollected in tranquility’. See William Wordsworth, ‘Preface To The *Lyrical Ballads* (1800)’ in *The Prose Works Of William Wordsworth*, vol. 1, pp. 118–160.

⁶¹ Quoted in Manning, ‘Wordsworth And *The Keepsake*’ p. 53.

⁶² Cope, p. 382.

⁶³ Letitia Elizabeth Landon, ‘On The Ancient And Modern Influence Of Poetry’ in *Letitia Elizabeth Landon: Selected Writings*, p. 167.

the midnight sky; / And wish, so passionately wish, / A light like theirs on high' and 'My first, my last, my only wish, / Say will my charmed chords / Wake to the morning light of fame, / And breathe again my words?'⁶⁴ This supports the comments in her essay, but also exemplifies a worry that it may not be her words that are remembered, but, as a female celebrity, her audience's constructed image of herself (their 'L.E.L.') which will outlast her.⁶⁵ After all, 'writers do not set their own mark on their property', either in posterity or contemporaneously: reception by others does. Hence, Landon recognises that a text cannot exist on its own: it requires the reader's 'breath' (through their reading, interpretation, and response to it, or, in a more material way, the reader's money) to bring it into life, now and in posterity. But, differently to Wordsworth, these are necessary perils according to Landon. As Stephen Behrendt argues, 'Landon, writing toward the end of the era, makes the related point that the value of art lies not in the solitary act of contemplation and creation but rather in the shared activities of consciousness raising that come with *consuming* art—with reading—as part of an interactive community'.⁶⁶ Displaying such attitudes in her essay, Landon goes on to suggest that whilst the factors that govern taste in the Romantic period may be questionable, without a 'creed' with audience at its centre as 'they who sit in the gate called the beautiful, which leads to the temple' determining who enter, 'poetry has neither present life nor future immortality'.⁶⁷ For Landon (in contrast to Wordsworth's dismissive attitude towards his contemporary reception), evidently poetry must engage with and be responded to in the present, in order to be deemed worthy of remembrance and thus judgement in the future. 'Touch' between parties, then, again stands as a crucial component in the success of poetry, both contemporary and deferred.

With this in mind, Mellor argues that Romanticism can be divided into two forms: a masculine Romanticism, dominated by the 'egotistical sublime' of Wordsworthian thought which celebrates the 'achievements of the imagination or the overflow of powerful feelings', and a feminine Romanticism which 'promoted a politics of gradual rather than violent social change, a social change that extends the values of domesticity into the public realm' and which functioned along communitarian lines rather than celebrating the achievement of the individual.⁶⁸ Bennett describes her theory: 'feminine

⁶⁴ Letitia Elizabeth Landon, 'Lines Of Life' in *Ibid.*, ll. 53–56, 93–96.

⁶⁵ These are concerns that I have already highlighted which Landon discussed as early as *The Improvisatrice*.

⁶⁶ Behrendt, pp. 4–5.

⁶⁷ Landon, 'On The Ancient And Modern Influence Of Poetry', p. 168.

⁶⁸ Mellor, *Romanticism and Gender*, pp. 2,3.

Romanticism is “based on a subjectivity constructed in relation to other subjectivities” and involves a self that is ‘fluid, absorptive, responsive, with permeable ego boundaries’.⁶⁹ Of course, as this project is attempting to show, such ideas surrounding subjectivity are not defined exclusively by gender. Both Scott and Byron write with other subjectivities in mind, incorporating their understanding of constituencies of readers into their creative processes. Indeed, even Wordsworth’s claim that poetry is ‘the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings’ as well as ‘man speaking to men’, according to Peter Manning, paints men’s communications between one another in the feminine terms of uncontrolled ‘feelings’.⁷⁰ But it is undeniable that Landon’s work was affected strongly, as I have been discussing, by her position as a female writer in a patriarchal culture.

By looking at the compositional processes of Landon, Byron, and Scott, we see that popular writers compose aware of their relation to the other subjectivities of audience and, on occasion, non-authorial agents such as their publishers.⁷¹ While gender is certainly, as I have been arguing, an important factor, it is not the only one. What makes all of these writers depart from the Wordsworthian ideology is a celebrity relationship with a vast, contemporary fanbase and a demanding market which encourages them to embrace other subjectivities into the composition process. Landon exemplifies such ideas in her preface to *The Venetian Bracelet* (quoted in my Introduction):

A highly-cultivated state of society must ever have for concomitant evils, that selfishness, the result of indolent indulgence; and that heartlessness attendant on refinement, which too often hardens while it polishes. Aware that to elevate I must first soften, and that if I wished to purify I must first touch, I have ever endeavoured to bring forward grief, disappointment, the fallen leaf, the faded flower, the broken heart, and the early grave.⁷²

⁶⁹ Bennett, *Culture of Posterity*, p. 66.

⁷⁰ Stuart Curran also posits a similar point to Manning in that Wordsworth’s claims are written explicitly in the apparently ‘feminine’ terms of spontaneity and overflowing feelings. See Stuart Curran, ‘The I Altered,’ in *Romanticism and Feminism*, ed. Anne K. Mellor, (Bloomington, IN; Indiana University Press, 1988), pp. 185–207; and Manning, ‘Wordsworth And *The Keepsake*’, p. 66.

⁷¹ Indeed, having become popular through such a communicative and collaborative model of authorship, it can be said that Byron, Landon, and Scott could not refuse to acknowledge the audience that helped construct and maintain their careers. Wordsworth had that option available due to his neglect by his contemporaries.

⁷² Landon, ‘Preface’ to *The Venetian Bracelet*, pp. 102–103.

In contrast to her description of Wordsworth's 'egoistical' poetry in *Romance and Reality*, she questions '[W]ho will deny that our best and most popular (indeed in this case best and popular are equivalent terms) poetry makes its appeal to the higher and better feelings of our nature'?⁷³ Speaking in similarly feminine terms as Mellor's theory, in order to 'soften', Landon must 'touch', and she can achieve this by appealing to 'the higher and better feelings'. Crucially, she proposes that this feeling must be communicated to a second party through 'touch'. For Landon then, poetry is a shared experience whose value is based as much on the poet's experience as it is audience engagement. Audience engagement or 'touch', whether it be audience 'touching' or shaping Landon's works, or vice versa, is something to be encouraged and embraced in poetry, whether that poetry is Wordsworthian in style ('impressed with the beauty before his eyes') or Byronic (startling 'us with the depth of our secret thoughts'). This stands in contrast to Wordsworth's attempt to 'creat[e] the taste by which he is to be enjoyed', which suggests that, rather than embracing audience desire, their potential touch is a tainting effect that must be reconfigured through the poet's will.⁷⁴ Ultimately, Landon agrees with Wordsworth that she must shape the taste by which she is to be enjoyed by ('to elevate I must first soften'), but she acknowledges that in order to do that (to 'purify') she must engage with ('touch') her contemporary audience, and inevitably the market which both parties must operate under. This contact, then, inevitably shapes her and her work too, hence her willingness to accept the possibility that 'best and popular' might be 'equivalent terms'. Ultimately, to Landon, the Wordsworthian notion of poetry as transcending commerciality is an ideal, albeit one that can never be achieved.

Due to their successful engagement with the Romantic literary marketplace, such ideas surrounding 'touch' seems a natural result for poets like Landon, Byron, and Scott. Landon evidently viewed fame and large sales as a method of conferring legitimacy on her texts, as they have evidently come into contact with (or 'touched', as she argued in 'On The Ancient And Modern Influence Of Poetry') their intended audience. This experience of positive feedback and following likely sculpted Landon's communitarian views on poetry whilst Wordsworth's contemporary neglect acted in a similar manner upon him. Such engagement, then, also encouraged Landon to adopt a view of

⁷³ Landon, 'On The Ancient And Modern Influence Of Poetry', p. 165.

⁷⁴ Wordsworth, 'Essay Supplementary To The Preface', p. 80.

posterity very like Byron's in *Don Juan*, with it being characterised, as Stewart summarises, as 'a question, a possibility, a doubt'.⁷⁵ Landon's 'Lines Of Life' ends with a section hoping 'Let music make less terrible / The silence of the dead', although she also states that she 'care[s] not, so my spirit last / Long after life has fled'.⁷⁶ Stewart proposes that Landon's poetry offers three alternatives for posterity: decay until forgotten; a reader bringing her words to life through reading and reciting; or a third possibility whereby she lives on as a statue, celebrated for surface (much like the Improvisatrice in her tale).⁷⁷ From her 'Lines Of Life', and her preface to *The Golden Violet*, Landon knows not how she will be remembered, if she will be remembered, or even if she wants to be remembered. However, by engaging with 'they who sit in the gate called the beautiful, which leads to the temple' (her contemporary audience), letting them 'touch' and influence her, just as much as she does them, Landon proposes (like Byron) that such 'touch' makes her more likely to achieve 'future immortality' and more likely to be able to 'soften' her audience's tastes. After all, 'writers do not set their own mark on their property', either in posterity or at the time of their composition: reception by others does.

Conclusion

Having achieved such enormous fame by 1831 through her longer poems, Landon could pivot her relationship with audience away from one of audience fantasy based on gendered conceptions, to one more reminiscent of modern celebrity whereby her audience are intrigued by the conditions under which she worked and how this sculpted her viewpoints. This emerged far more explicitly in *Romance and Reality*, although it is impossible to say whether this represented the real Landon or, more likely, another persona sculpted by such audience relations. Whilst a critical Landon had been present in personae or stances she had used throughout her poetic career, it emerged as the dominant voice over audience fantasy in her novels. Landon, then, constantly imagines audience engagement with all of her works, and figures their responses into her composition, changing this dynamic with formats such as the annuals or novels.

Rather than allowing potential pressures to constrict her, such as the format of annuals or gender conceptions, Landon actively uses such supposed 'pressures' to play

⁷⁵ Stewart, *The Form of Poetry*, p. 103.

⁷⁶ Landon, 'Lines Of Life', ll. 105–109.

⁷⁷ Stewart, *The Form of Poetry*, p. 103.

with and create, figuring them as part of her relationship with her audience. Rather than pressures, such influences on Landon's career can thus be seen as opportunities that Landon seized to both ensure her financial position whilst being able to play with and critique ideas she found problematic. She does this primarily via the use of personae throughout her career which work to display and contrast readerly 'romance' with (supposedly) authorial 'reality'.

Finally, one theme consistent across Landon, Byron, and Scott's respective careers, is the problematic relationship they held with Wordsworth's ideologies concerning literature and its relationship to audiences, both contemporary and in posterity. Having built careers upon contemporary success, it is little wonder that Landon disagreed with Wordsworth's claims that contemporary acclaim designated posthumous neglect. All three writers critiqued Wordsworth's assertions, although none of them wholly dismissed them. However, the main distinction begins in the foundational fact of Landon's career (Byron's and Scott's too) that poetry must exist in relation to the marketplace and the contexts and audiences behind it. Wordsworth never considered audience as a creative influence on his composition: these three popular writers evidently did, embracing the idea of multiple audiences' engagement as a part of their individual creative processes. Wordsworth's assertion that 'every author, as far as he is great and at the same time original, has had the task of creating the taste by which he is to be enjoyed' denotes that the writer creates alone, not the writer in tandem with his audience. For Byron, Landon, and Scott, poetry cannot (as Wordsworth suggests) exist without contact with its contemporary context, a virtue that he believed was a guarantee of deferred popularity. Indeed, for them, texts, as a product of a cultural moment, are inherently in interaction with the culture around them and, more importantly, an audience and the influences and pressures such an audience place upon their composition. Indeed, within the relationship of literary celebrity, that popularity is only maintained by accounting for audience opinions in the author's interactions with them. Influences upon Landon's composition process were thus welcomed, explaining how she took pressures and incorporated them into her poly-vocal composition process. For Landon, then, literature's value is only worth what its audience and culture believe it is worth.

Conclusion

In a journal entry in 1828, Scott provides an interesting counterpoint to the poly-vocal model of authorship he, Landon, and Byron had thrived upon throughout their careers:

I am annoyd beyond measure with the idle intrusion of voluntary correspondents; each man who has a pen, ink, sheet of foolscap and an [hour] to spare, flies a letter at me. I believe the postage costs me £100 besides innumerable franks; and all the letters regard the writer's own hopes or projects, or are filld with unaskd advice or extravagant requests.¹

Despite his usually playful and engaged self, Scott was only human. In a world as cacophonous and vertiginous as Romantic literary culture, where the popular author (even behind personae) is demanded to be constantly conscious of and engaged to vast and varied audiences, moments of frustration, disillusion, and weariness would be an occasional natural response.

I raise this for one reason: to highlight that the examination of relationships between authors, audiences, and editors are never truly consistent; there are always contradictions and disagreements.² However, a crucial point of this thesis is that it is also these precise moments of instability which power authors' creativity. When the bonds between author, editors, and audiences fray, stand diametrically opposed, or are stretched thin, this often spurs the creation of and weaves itself into the fabric of the resulting texts. Importantly, also, is that it is only through play, experimentation and compromise (rather than repression and opposition) that these bonds can remain intact, and thus maintain the author's relationship with these other crucial parties, a poly-vocal model of authorship, and thus the celebrity and success authors like Byron, Scott, and Landon enjoyed.³ As I have demonstrated, such frustrations are evident at varying

¹ However, one point to highlight is that this burst of irritation appears near the end of Scott's career, immediately before he was to reveal his identity in the second instalment of *The Chronicles Of The Canongate*. This complements my argument regarding Scott considering an alternative relationship with audience after his bankruptcy. See Scott, 'Sunday, 6 January 1828' in *The Journal of Sir Walter Scott*, p. 411.

² As Byron asks: 'if a writer should be quite consistent, / How could he possibly show things existent?' See Byron, *Don Juan*, Canto XV, ll. 695–696.

³ Byron's break with Murray stands as an example of where the bonds between poet and publisher became too unstable, however. As I have demonstrated, though, this did not break By-

points throughout all of these authors' careers. Yet these frustrations never caused them to cast aside the idea of audiences or direct editorial intervention in their works. Due to Scott, Byron, and Landon's respective aims, their individual compositional methods, and consequently their astronomical fames, the Wordsworthian idea of rejecting the influence of contemporary audiences was not available to them.

Crucially, then, these three authors understood one fundamental pillar of popular literature: that reading 'produce[s] uncertainty in readers' comprehension, and that these gaps spur the reader to produce connections which "complete" the text'. 'Whenever the reader bridges the gaps, [...] communication begins.'⁴ Byron, Scott, and Landon all understood that, in order to be contemporarily successful, they must actively construct their texts with the new emerging Romantic culture of divided readerships at their core. The idea of readerly interpretation (and a deliberate construction of their texts to encourage to this) sits at the heart of all of their creativities. A new consciousness of a powerful, divided, and exponentially increasing audience brought about by the evolving conditions of Romantic literary culture sits at the heart of these authors' creativities. This ultimately led to, as I have considered in my three case studies, Landon's use of pretence in her poetry, Byron's provoking navigation between audiences in *Don Juan*, and Scott's responsive and playful use of pseudonymity in the prefaces to his novels, all as ways to negotiate the implications of their popularity amongst Romantic audiences.⁵ In this way, Landon's shrewd evocation of 'touch' between herself and her contemporary audience as the central requirement of any literature, stands at the core of her own, Byron's, and Scott's composition.⁶

However, readers were not the only creative considerations that acted upon these authors. Editorial intervention (often geared towards Murray, Constable, or Jerdan's understandings of Romantic audiences) also crucially intersected with these three authors' texts, as did the fluctuating pressures of the literary marketplace and Romantic culture. What has become evident from this study is that, due to their popularity and successful

ron's creative connection with his audience. It was actually that very bond (the different attitudes which publisher and poet held towards the same audiences) that stretched their relationship to breaking point, with Byron more willing than Murray to play amongst the contours of his audiences.

⁴ I quote Bennett here, who is summarising Wolfgang Iser's *The Implied Reader* (1970) and *The Act Of Reading* (1978). See Bennett, *Readers and Reading*, p. 20.

⁵ Indeed, in regard to Scott, perhaps the most explicit example amongst these three authors inviting their audience to reflect on their role in 'completing' texts that I have discussed, is the scene at St. Ruth's Abbey whereby multiple witnesses interpret the monument in different ways in Chapter Seventeen of *The Antiquary*. Without their interpretations, the ruin remains lifeless.

⁶ See Landon, 'Preface' To *The Venetian Bracelet*, pp. 102–103.

model of authorship, my three chosen authors could not possibly neglect any of these influences when writing. Such acknowledgement and dialogue between the parties and influences had built their success, fuelled demand for their texts, acted as the creative fulcrum at the core of their composition, and had even sculpted the public perceptions and identities of these authors. Literary culture and the marketplace streamlined their texts in order to address simultaneously the various ‘interpretative tendencies and ideological contours’ that Klancher identifies as permeating Romantic audiences.⁷ For the most part, editors and publishers acted as aids in their authors’ attempts to ‘touch’ and connect with Romantic audiences but, when author and publisher’s views on this departed, or even when an audience’s views were at variance with an author’s intentions, it often created the most volatile, imaginative, and intriguing moments of their literary production and of the parties’ mutually dependent relationships. This authorial consideration of audience desires, editorial input, cultural and industrial pressures (often direct, as in the case of James Ballantyne’s immediate amendments to Scott’s manuscripts) thus produced an ultimately poly-vocal product: a product made up of the intentions of the author, the interventions of editors, and conceptions by the author of new constituencies of readers emerging in the period. It was this consideration and adaptation that created and maintained Byron, Scott, and Landon’s popularity and reputations, and made it almost impossible for them to construct literature in any other manner.

‘Touch’ (to use Landon’s word), is easier to achieve when the target of such contact remains stable. The transitional and unusually ‘precarious’ period of Romantic literary culture meant that audiences were vast, unknowable, and cacophonous with different desires and beliefs. A newly professional and industrialised literary culture additionally made the authors’ position less secure. In that dizzying location within the rubric of Romantic literary culture, then, some authors’ responses to this were (as Newlyn aptly identifies) to repress their knowledge of, to distance themselves from such a position and, importantly, to neglect contemporary audiences, negating ‘touch’ altogether. To be popular, though, (and as a result of their eventual popularity) Byron, Scott, and Landon had to negotiate themselves a position within this evolving rubric. The result of this was that their texts had to experiment and play in an unfamiliar environment, testing ideas, engaging with audiences and editors, and tailoring themselves to the best results. By assessing their ideas against mercurial audiences and direct editorial responses, creativity for these authors was collaborative and playful, a matter of relationship, rather

⁷ Klancher, *The Making of English Reading Audiences*, p. 6.

than a matter of dominance or control. Ultimately, in searching for an understanding of their relationship to a new anonymous and varied audience, and within a new mercantile environment in which success was engendered by sales, these three popular writers developed a playful relationship with their audience, their editors, and Romantic literary culture to experiment with and better refine those relationships, leading to the success of their works. Whilst a new conception of audiences and the very real intercessions (and, often, vagaries) of Romantic literary and industrial culture was at the centre of popular authors' creativity, play and experimentation was primarily their response to it, rather than anxiety, rejection, or repression.

Evidently, then, it was only through such flexible play and experimentation that popular writers during the Romantic period could invite such industrial editorial intervention in their works and to allow audiences to self-consciously view themselves as integral to the construction of their texts: control or domination would have broken such relationships. Simultaneously, as I have demonstrated, the route to contemporary acclaim was through such considerate relationships with audiences and collaboration with the components of Romantic literary culture. Ultimately, pushing boundaries, as well as considerate, compromising and engaged creative relationships with audiences and editors, were mutually reinforcing requirements in Byron, Scott, and Landon's successful careers.

Fundamentally, then, this thesis has explored an alternative model of authorship present in the Romantic period, one built upon deep consideration, teasing engagement, and innovative creativity with shifting audiences and an evolving literary culture. Building upon the recent upsurge in studies that consider the collaborative nature of textual production in the period, Byron, Landon, and Scott's use of play and trial can help us better understand how popular authors (which scholars have until recently neglected or studied in terms that did not fully account for celebrity, popularity, or fan engagement) constructed their texts and negotiated with the implications of their own popularity amongst complex audiences. It also helps recognise how the idea and increasing awareness of knowledgeable and forthright audiences, as well as the direct interventions of agents within the literary industry, actively engaged with and influenced the texts they produced and consumed. By considering play and experimentation, we can appreciate the period as a complex matrix of shifting influences and relationships which ultimately results in texts that are popular, poly-vocal, market-conscious products.

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